HEAVEN AND HUMANITY IN UNITY: *THEOSIS*, SINO-CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND THE SECOND CHINESE ENLIGHTENMENT

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by

ALEXANDER CHOW 曹榮錦
MAT (Biblical Studies and Theology), Fuller Theological Seminary, 2006
ThM (Theology), Regent College, 2008

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Department of Theology and Religion
School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion
College of Arts and Law
University of Birmingham
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores various trajectories of contextual theology as they have developed in the two Chinese enlightenments of twentieth and twenty-first century China. Drawing methodologically from the typological works of historian Justo González and the missiologists Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder, one of the main aims of this study is to map and evaluate the various types of Chinese theology. An analysis of three major Chinese Protestant representatives will identify the tendencies of each type, highlight the importance of a contextual theology in dealing with a context's socio-political concerns and religio-philosophical tradition, and show a bias in Chinese theology towards Latin Christianity. This leads to the second major aim of the study to explore the usefulness of Eastern Orthodox category of *theosis* and related subjects in the Second Chinese Enlightenment. It will highlight the tendencies of Chinese philosophy and religion, inclusive of Chinese Protestantism, to exhibit many themes from Byzantine Christianity. It will also call attention to the potential usefulness of this other "Eastern" theology in China's socio-political concerns. This study will conclude by discussing the possibilities of Eastern Orthodoxy in playing an important role in complementing and supplementing future developments of a Chinese contextual theology.

To my Betty.

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A NOTE ABOUT ROMANISATION

There are a number of incidents in this study where a language other than English is used. Particularly, when Chinese words are expressed in the main body of the text using Hanyu Pinyin. Pinyin is the standard romanization system for the Mandarin dialect of the Chinese language in China today. There are also other systems like Tongyong Pinyin of Taiwan and the older Wade-Giles system, as well as various romanisation systems for Cantonese and other dialects. Hence, certain names and terms have historical significance using different systems of romanisation (e.g., Sun Yat-sen rather than Sun Zhongshan) and may be used in the main body of this study, followed by pinyin in parenthesis. In all other instances, preference shall be given to Hanyu Pinyin. In the case of works referenced, all Chinese texts will be presented with the author's name in Hanyu Pinyin and, if appropriate, an alternative rendering will be provided in parenthesis. A Chinese–English glossary for terms and names used in this study can be found on page 227. It is presented using romanisations (pinyin and some common alternatives), Chinese traditional characters and common English renderings. Additionally, the Greek alphabet will be used to render Greek words or phrases. However, for both Chinese and Greek, English translations are provided alongside the foreign terms, where appropriate.

ABBREVIATIONS

Terminology

CCC China Christian Council

CPC Communist Party of China

PLA People's Liberation Army

PRC People's Republic of China

TSPM Three-Self Patriotic Movement

YMCA Young Men's Christian Association

Multi-volume Works

ANF Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers.* 10 vols. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1885–1896. Reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1951–1956. Reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

CD Karl Barth. *Church Dogmatics*. 4 vols. in 13 parts. Edited by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956–1969.

LW Martin Luther. *Luther's Works*. American Edition. 55 vols. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann. St. Louis, MO: Concordia; Philadelphia, PA: Muehlenberg and Fortress, 1955–1986.

NPNF Philip Schaff, et al., eds. *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. 2 series (14 vols. each). Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1887–1894. Reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1952–1956. Reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

ZZW Zhao Zichen (T. C. Chao). *Zhao Zichen Wenji* [The Works of T. C. Chao]. Edited by Wang Xiaochao. 5 vols. Beijing: Commercial Press, 2003–2010.

WMT Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong). *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*. 5 vols. Peking (Beijing): Foreign Language Press, 1961–1977.

INTRODUCTION

China, for nearly a millennium and a half, has largely viewed Christianity as a foreign religion for a foreign people. When Nestorian Christians[1] first traveled the silk road around the year 630, their faith intrigued the emperor but saw few converts. Centuries later, Catholic and Protestant missionaries evangelised with their cultures as much as with their faiths. Even when Eastern Orthodoxy first entered China in the seventeenth century, it was in the form of a diplomatic exchange from Russia with a ministry mainly towards Russian expatriates. As a consequence, for most of Christianity's history in China, few Chinese converts have been interested in establishing an indigenous church; even fewer would have a desire to pursue what the missiologist David Bosch calls "self-theologising" – the task of constructing a local theology.[2] However, this would change significantly by the beginning of the twentieth century.

During the early 1900s, in what would be known as the May Fourth movement (*wusi yundong*) or the Chinese Enlightenment (*zhongguo qimeng*),[3] all religious and spiritual traditions were being challenged by Chinese reformers. Some thinkers would attempt to salvage and modernise the traditions, giving rise to such movements as Humanistic Buddhism (*renjian fojiao*) and New Confucianism (*xin rujia* or *xin ruxue*) or Contemporary Neo-

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[1] There is some debate as to whether it is appropriate to use the term "Nestorian Christians" to describe this group because of the negative association with Nestorius (c. 386–c. 451). The preference of some is to use the term "Assyrian Church of the East." However, "Nestorian Christianity" continues to be the preferred manner by which this group is labeled. See, for example, the recent history written by sinologist Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (New York, NY: Wiley and Blackwell, 2011), 4–16.

[2] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 450–452.

[3] He Ganzhi, *Zhongguo Qimeng Yundong Shi* [The History of the Chinese Enlightenment Movement] (Shanghai: Life Books, 1937). Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

Confucianism (*dangdai xin rujia* or *dangdai xin ruxue*).[4] But the overall critique was that these ancient teachings were relics of China's premodern past and a hindrance for its future.

Christianity would have the double charge of being both obsolete and foreign. A notable exception to this was the important secular May Fourth leader Chen Duxiu (1879–1942) who published an article entitled "Christianity and the Chinese People" which would eventually be translated and republished in the missionary journal *The Chinese Recorder*. Chen Duxiu powerfully writes, "Our attitude toward Christianity should not merely be one of superficial understanding, with a view to removing cause for future trouble, but one of deep-seated appreciation. We should try to cultivate the lofty and majestic character of Jesus and imbue our very blood with his warm sympathetic spirit. In this way, we shall be saved from the pit of chilly indifference, darkness, and filth, into which we have fallen."[5] Later criticised by other secular reformers, Chen is sympathetic and believes in the social significance of Christianity for Chinese society. Regardless of this major exception, many Chinese Christians began to critically reexamine their faith to seek an indigenised expression suitable for the new intellectual climate. The divinity of Christ came into question as some saw Jesus as a mere social reformer comparable with Confucius (Kongzi, 551–479 BC), Mozi (c. 470–c. 391 BC) and Mao Zedong (1893–1976). Likewise, debates arose as to whether the church should be focused on personal piety, salvation and evangelism or, rather, be more involved in social activism.

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[4] Confucianism is often described as having three epochs: classic Confucianism formalised as state ideology in the Han dynasty, Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties and New Confucianism of the 20th century (for a detailed description, see Tu Wei-ming, "Toward a Third Epoch of Confucian Humanism: A Background Understanding," in *Confucianism: The Dynamics of Tradition*, ed. Irene Eber [New York, NY: Macmillan, 1986], 3–21; for a less sympathetic perspective of the third epoch, see John Makeham, ed., *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination* [New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003]). It is true that Neo-Confucianism and New Confucianism both exhibit religious qualities. While it is widely debated whether or not Confucianism can be considered a proper religion, it is not the purpose of this study to enter into that discussion.

[5] Chen Tu-hsiu (Chen Duxiu), "Christianity and Chinese People," trans. Y. Y. Tsu, *The Chinese Recorder* 51, no. 7 (July 1920): 454.

While various events brought a close to this Chinese Enlightenment, in the 1980s, a Second [Chinese] Enlightenment (*di er ci qimeng*) or New Enlightenment (*xin qimeng*) would begin.[6] Unlike its early-twentieth century predecessor which sought to completely overthrow the previous culture, the Second Chinese Enlightenment has followed a German model of enlightenment that is more sympathetic to China's historical legacy and traditional teachings. It has been a time of great spiritual and moral crisis and has resurrected many debates, especially dealing with questions around the nature of humanity, sin and salvation.

How are we to understand the Christian theological responses of the last century? On the one hand, many Chinese Protestants were deeply interested in indigenising the faith – that is, to establish an independent local church.[7] Whether intentional or not, this was often seen in aspirations to create a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating church independent of foreign control – the so-called "three-self" principles as articulated by the missionary strategists Henry Venn (1796–1873) and Rufus Anderson (1796–1880). However, the Chinese theologies must also be understood as contextual theologies which have been

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[6] Xu Jilin, "The Fate of an Enlightenment: Twenty Years in the Chinese Intellectual Sphere (1978–1998)," trans. Geremie R. Barné and Gloria Davies, in *Chinese Intellectuals Between State and Market*, eds. Edward Gu and Merle Goldman (London: Routledge, 2004 [1998]), 183–203. Edmond Tang, "The Second Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and Christianity Today," in *Identity and Marginality: Rethinking Christianity in North East Asia*, eds. Werner Ustorf and Toshiko Murayama (Frankfurt am Main; New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2000), 55–70.

There exists some debate as to whether China's last hundred years saw two independent enlightenments or two phases of one enlightenment. While not getting into that discussion, it is important to know that there was both a degree of connectedness and a distinction between the two historical periods.

[7] There is much debate around the terms "indigenisation," "inculturation" and "contextualisation." Within Protestantism, much of what is understood as "indigenisation" comes from the so-called "three-self" principles of Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson who argued for the development of a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating local church. "Inculturation," a term used mainly within Catholic circles, involves a dual process of transforming a local culture with the gospel and enriching the gospel by new understandings from the culture. While inclusive of both these ideas, "contextualisation" tries to provide theological answers to social, political and economic questions and tends to address the needs of a particular historical moment.

See Theological Education Fund, *Ministry in Context: The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund (1970–77)*, (Bromley, UK: Theological Education Fund, 1972); Shoki Coe, "Contextualizing Theology," in *Mission Trends No. 3*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 19–24; Ruy O. Costa, ed., *One Faith, Many Cultures: Inculturation, Indigenization, and Contextualization* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988); David Bosch, 420–432; Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 26–27.

shaped by the complex social, political and economic concerns of the two Chinese enlightenments. To varying degrees and approaches, Chinese Christians developed several major contextual theologies to answer the pressing concerns of their day.

Many people have tried to understand this broad Protestant Christian landscape in China by employing stereotypes like "fundamentalist" or "imperialist." However, doing so causes much confusion and may lead to many misunderstandings. It additionally does little justice to the theological nuances of each individual. This lack of clarity makes it difficult for anyone to engage with the Chinese context or help with the construction of a contextual theology. Hence, this present study explores a new approach in the discourse of Chinese theology as well as introduces a different understanding of salvation for the Chinese context.

DOMINANT PARADIGMS OF CLASSIFICATION

As compared to all other Christian traditions, Chinese attempts to contextualise the gospel in the 20th century was dominated by Protestant Christianity. The Chinese Catholic church, for example, took a more conservative approach to its indigenisation. The May Fourth Enlightenment occurred primarily during a time prior to Vatican II. As such, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) upheld scholasticism as the main "official" theology for Catholic churches. All Catholic seminaries in China were required to teach the same curriculum. Moreover, Catholic leaders in China tended to uphold a "translational" model of contextual theology that placed an emphasis on the indigenisation of the clergy and liturgy rather than address fundamental questions of the faith.[8] In the case of Eastern Orthodoxy in China, as we have already briefly discussed, its presence had mainly existed as a ministry to Russian expatriates. It would not be until after the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 when an

[8] Bevans, 37–53.

official autonomous Orthodox Chinese Church was established and separated from the Russian Orthodox Church. But its very inception came about out of a larger government agenda to sever structural and economic ties with all foreign powers (in this case, the Soviet Union) rather than on developing an indigenous presence or contextual theology.

In contrast, Protestant Christianity, did not have a centralised authority as those found in Rome or Moscow. Moreover, Protestantism was greatly influenced by modern liberal theology and social gospel teachings which encouraged Chinese adherents to break out of the Western theological mould. Even more conservative Chinese Protestants sought to be released from foreign denominationalism and established independent churches and denomination-like networks led by local Chinese. In comparison with their Catholic or Orthodox counterparts, Chinese Protestants of the 20th century were much more keen and able to pursue a localised expression of their faith. Hence while the socio-political issues of China were common to all Christians, only Chinese Protestants were availed the opportunity to construct their own theologies for the Chinese enlightenments.

There have been a variety of approaches enlisted to organise and understand Chinese Protestant contextual theology. These frameworks have helped to map individuals thinkers and their theological reflections as well as helped to plot the theological trends across different periods. They can also be useful to aid in the identification of areas that may be lacking and need more development. However, the sheer act of placing people into different groups has the risk of being too general and limited. Additionally, rather than serving the pursuit of knowledge, any such organisational tool can be wielded as a weapon of attack, marginalising individuals of one group or another. For the tasks of understanding Chinese theology during the two Chinese enlightenments and looking for areas of improvement, how have the historical methods faired?

Fundamentalist–Modernist Impasse

Earlier on in this period of indigenisation, the fundamentalist–modernist debate from the West became a major organisational rubric in Chinese Protestantism. On one side were individuals like the self-proclaimed fundamentalist Wang Mingdao (1900–1991), pastor of one of the largest churches in China during the May Fourth Enlightenment. Wang believed the church must maintain fundamental doctrines like the virgin birth, the revelatory nature of the Bible, Jesus' miracles and his death and resurrection. He also believed that, theologically, the church was not to be involved in any political or social activities. On the other side of the debate were those who tended to be sympathetic to modernity, opposed any supernatural elements of the faith and was deeply interested in the social issues of the times. Y. T. Wu (Wu Yaozong, 1893–1979), for many years a secretary of the Beijing Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), believed God's will was for all humanity to love. Christians in China are to do so by active involvement in the social reconstruction of the country. Wu would later embrace communism and see it as seeking to fulfil the same ultimate goals as Christianity. In the 1950s, Y. T. Wu and other Christian leaders worked with China's Premier Zhou Enlai (1898–1976) to establish the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), a government-sponsored parachurch organisation. Wang was infuriated and accused TSPM supporters as being modernists and, therefore, members of the "party of unbelievers" – non-Christians.[9] Wang Mingdao, using rhetoric from a debate in the Western church, argues that the Chinese Christian context primarily encompassed two theological groupings: fundamentalists and unbelieving modernists.

While this theological distinction was helpful for Wang Mingdao and others in attacking "modernists," his groupings had several shortcomings. One problem in Wang's view is that he equated members of the TSPM with modernist Christianity. However, when

[9] Wang Mingdao, "We, Because of Faith," in *Documents of the Three-Self Movement: Source Materials for the Study of the Protestant Church in Communist China*, ed. Wallace C. Merwin and Francis P. Jones (New York, NY: National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, 1963 [1955]), 99–106.

looking at the roster of TSPM leaders, it includes individuals like Jia Yuming (1880–1964) and Marcus Cheng (Chen Chonggui, 1884–1963) – both of whom could more accurately be theologically described as fundamentalists than modernists. Another problem can be found in the limits of Wang's theological categories. One of the "five fundamentals" traditionally held by fundamentalists includes a view of Christ's death as a penal substitution for the sins of humanity. In contrast, Wang Mingdao criticised modernists for looking at Jesus' sacrifice mainly as a moral example. Y. T. Wu would argue, Jesus' death showed the extent of his love for humanity which Chinese Christians must model in their pursuit of national salvation. But as the Swedish theologian Gustaf Aulén (1879–1977) has demonstrated, Christianity has often developed around three atonement theories: an objective view, a subjective view and a "classical" view – Christus Victor.[10] In the Second Chinese Enlightenment, it would be Bishop K. H. Ting (Ding Guangxun, 1915–), the main spokesperson of the TSPM at the time, who would articulate a theology of the "Cosmic Christ" (*yuzhou de jidu*) inline with Aulén's Christus Victor. While Wang would probably label Ting a "modernist," his fundamentalist–modernistic paradigm does not take into consideration the possibility of a third atonement type. Wang Mingdao's appropriation of the fundamentalist–modernist debate has such a narrow theological focus that it has limited its usefulness to his attacks on a very specific group of Protestant Christians during the earlier part of the 20th century.

Confucian Activism or Daoist Pietism

Others have grouped Chinese Christians of this period based on social involvement. In response to Wang Mingdao, K. H. Ting argues that Christians have chosen to divide themselves based on social and political reasons rather than theological views. One group of Christians are patriotic and anti-imperialistic; another group simply ignores the ills of

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[10] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003).

imperialism.[11] For Ting, his main gauge for whether a Christian is a "patriot" or an "imperialist" was whether or not he or she was an activist against the crimes of foreign aggression and imperialism and were willing to actively support the new patriotic Christian establishment, the TSPM. In a similar fashion, the missiologist Ralph Covell describes this using two traditional Chinese ideologies: Confucianism and Daoism. Confucianism fundamentally challenges its followers to live out the cosmic moral code known as the *Tianming* (the Heavenly Mandate). Monarchs ruled based on it and, if corrupt, had lost the *Tianming* and were dethroned. This idea is best summed up in the Confucian aphorism, "Heaven engenders, humanity completes" ("*Tiansheng rencheng*"). In other words, humans are to actively participate in the will of Heaven (*Tian*). Daoism, in contrast, sees the best form of activism as *wuwei* – the art of non-action. The ruler is to establish policies and pave the way for correct living but not to artificially force any improvements. In quietude, the Daoist passively seeks to be in harmony with the natural world. Ralph Covell, borrowing terms from traditional Chinese spirituality, argues that the Chinese Christians of the May Fourth Enlightenment fell into one of two categories: "Confucian activism" and "Daoist pietism."[12] Like K. H. Ting, Covell believes that Christians of the first part of the 20th century could be grouped based on their involvement with the greater culture. The Confucian activist participated in writing and radical involvement with the concerns of the times, not being afraid of social or political revolution. The Daoist pietist, however, sought to withdraw from the problems of the world and focus on reform of the individual through the quiet, spiritual life.

So rather than theological differences, K. H. Ting and Ralph Covell have categorised Chinese Christians based on their relationships and engagements with the surrounding world.

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[11]K. H. Ting, "Truth and Slander," in *No Longer Strangers: Selected Writings of K. H. Ting*, ed. Raymond L. Whitehead (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989 [1955]), 141–142, 145.

[12] Ralph R. Covell, *Confucius, The Buddha, and Christ: A History of the Gospel in Chinese* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1986), 182–205.

But it is not necessarily true that those who did not join the TSPM were "imperialists" and not "activists." According to Covell, one of the main characteristics of a Confucian activist is his or her writing activity. Yet Wang Mingdao, described as a Daoist pietistc by Covell, was a prolific writer and published his own quarterly magazine, *Lingshi Jikan* (*Spiritual Food Quarterly*). He wanted to invoke changes in the lives of Christians and non-Christians through his popular publication. Additionally, Daoist pietists like Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng, 1903–1972) vehemently attacked the domination of foreign denominationalism and established their churches based on the Venn–Anderson principles well before the establishment of the TSPM – the newly-formed "patriotic" parachurch organisation. These "Daoist pietists" were strong activists as well – but with a countercultural approach to their contemporary social and political currents.

Another concern is Covell's use of China's spiritual heritage to describe the Christian's engagement with culture. Why is Chinese Buddhism, the third of China's *sanjiao* (the three great teachings of Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism), not included in the mix? How does one's cultural engagement interact with his or her theological disposition? He does not even try to place Chinese Catholicism in his categories, simply labelling it as "Catholic Responses."[13] Ralph Covell's use of China's spiritual language to organise Christianity may be convenient in some respects, but can lead to many misconceptions as Christianity is a very different spiritual tradition. For example, in the Western world, it is common to understand the word "religion" as referring to a system of faith and worship centred around a supreme being or a number of gods. However, this is very different in the Chinese context. As Julia Ching (Qin Jiayi, 1934–2001) explains, the Chinese word for religion, *zongjiao*, "did not exist in the Chinese vocabulary until the late nineteenth century, when it entered through Japanese translations of European works and terminology."[14] *Zongjiao* may perhaps be better

[13] Covell, 202–204.

[14] Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (London: MacMillan Press, 1993), 2.

translated as “teachings of our ancestors” or “doctrinal lineages.” This is why even until now, there is much debate as to whether Confucianism is a philosophy or a religion since it does not have the concept of a deity but does have many religious qualities. It is also often argued that Buddhism is not a religion since the Buddha is not a god but a person who has reached a complete understanding of the reality of life and the universe. Hence, while there exist problems applying a Judeo-Christian understanding of religion onto a Chinese ideological framework, it is likewise quite dangerous and, at times, inappropriate to use Chinese spiritual terms to explain such a foreign idea as the Christian gospel.

TOWARDS A NEW THEOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION

The dominant approaches to categorising Chinese Christianity have tended to focus on a small set of representatives from May Fourth Protestantism. Some have focused on theological debates while others on socio-political involvement. Included in these debates are significant questions of the relationship between church and state and different perspectives on theologies of culture and of religion. However, during the Second Chinese Enlightenment, the TSPM changed from being a parachurch organisation to being the main legal Protestant entity in China. This posed a challenge for Christians who wanted to practice their faiths openly yet have been uneasy about joining a state-affiliated religious organisation. As a consequence, the revived TSPM has included members from a variety of theological persuasions and views of cultural engagement. Theological studies in this latter period would also be complicated by the growth of Christians and non-Christians interested in Christianity and working in secular universities and government institutions in what has become known as Sino-Christian Theology (*hanyu jidu shenxue*) or Sino-theology (*hanyu shenxue*). Hence, the older paradigms do not provide enough scope for understanding the growing realities of the Second Chinese Enlightenment.

The earlier classification systems are also limited in their ability to construct a new contextual theology. Are there any resources in the Catholic or Eastern Orthodox traditions for Chinese theology? Unlike their Protestant counterparts, Chinese Catholics were limited by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and tended to uphold a scholastic theology. For Eastern Orthodoxy in China, it has largely existed out of diplomatic relationship with Russia and has seen a relatively small number of Chinese converts. But outside of China, Christian theology has seen many developments as a result of Vatican II, the collapse of the USSR and the growth of Christianity in places like Latin America, Africa and other parts of Asia. While the older paradigms of understanding Chinese Christianity had their uses, the construction of a new Chinese theology must be able to dialogue with World Christianity beyond the limits of May Fourth Protestantism.

One recently developed typology that may be useful in the Chinese context was conceived by the church historian Justo L. González in *Christian Thought Revisited* and expanded in an important study in global missions by Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder in *Constants in Context*.[15] While Bevans and Schroeder primarily rely on González's work, they also make use of, to a lesser extent, a parallel typology developed by the feminist theologian Dorothee Sölle in her text *Thinking About God.*[16] Yet, rather than exploring theology from the greater context of Christian history, Sölle limits her work to context of contemporary theology. Hence, her work is less comprehensive than the others, as she produces a typology around three types of contemporary, theological frameworks: Orthodox, Liberal and Radical. Nevertheless, in contrast with Sölle, González and Bevans–Schroeder formulate a system whereby they identify three major theological expressions across time and space – historical Christianity and global missions. González articulates his

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[15] Justo L. González, *Christian Thought Revisited: Three Types of Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999). Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004).

[16] Dorothee Sölle, *Thinking About God: An Introduction to Theology* (London: SCM, 1990).

framework as both a theologian and a historian, spanning the theological trajectories of two millennia. Bevans–Schroeder have adapted this to focus on six historical periods which Christians had addressed six theological constants: Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, salvation, anthropology and culture. Additionally, the two missiologists explore these constants or theological questions in respect to the various historical and cultural contexts that the Christians encountered. So, while the theological and cultural questions remain the same, they are answered differently based on the contexts involved.

Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder believe missionaries have developed theological solutions to these six theological questions and have tended to fall into one of three types. This extended typology is therefore seen as useful in understanding the ways the gospel has been conveyed in the manifold contexts of global missiology, as illustrated below:[17]

	Type A	**Type B**	**Type C**
Prototype	Tertullian	Origen	Irenaeus
Key theme	Law	Truth	History
Christology	Person: high Redemption: satisfaction Exclusive	Person: - Premodern: high - Modern: low Redemption: exemplar Inclusive/modified pluralist	Person: low Redemption: liberation Inclusive/moderate pluralist
Ecclesiology	Institutional	Mystical communion; sacrament	Herald/servant
Eschatology	Futurist Individual	Realised Individual	Inaugurated Historical
Salvation	Spiritual	Premodern: spiritual illumination Modern: holistic	Holistic
Anthropology	Negative Hierarchical	Positive Premodern: hierarchical Modern: equality	Positive Premodern: less hierarchical Modern: equality
Culture	Premodern: classicist Modern: empirical Counter-cultural or translation models	Premodern: classicist Modern: empirical Anthropological model	Premodern: classicist Modern: empirical Praxis or moderate counter-cultural

[17] Bevans and Schroeder, 37.

When applied to the Chinese context, this typology will inevitably require certain amendments. However, we will reserve this analysis to the conclusion of this study.

For González and Bevans–Schroeder, their intention is to formulate a typology that gives a broader picture of Christian theological and mission history. In contrast to Dorothee Sölle's emphasis on contemporary labels like "Orthodoxy" and "Liberal," González and Bevans–Schroeder divide their three types arbitrarily as theological types A, B and C. Type A finds its origins in the writings of Tertullian of Carthage (c. 160–c. 220), thought by many to be a lawyer. It is a law-oriented theology that emphasises the havoc in this world caused by the sin of the first humans. The only solution is the blood sacrifice of God's Son as a penal substitution for the world. The entire human race will face judgement at the eschaton and progress to either eternal damnation or eternal bliss based on how they have responded to God's solution. Type B theology was first found in the thinking of third century Origen of Alexandria (185–232). Embracing philosophy as the *ancilla theologiae* ("handmaiden of theology") the deeply Platonic Origen believes that immutable and transcendent truth must be at the forefront of theology. While the physical order is the result of the first pure intellects' sin, when God's divine purposes are fulfilled, a universal restoration will occur and the material world will cease to exist. This fundamental optimism towards the fate of the physical world argues that Christ's main salvific role has been to illuminate and teach, calling all the cosmos back to its original intellectual reality.

The mission of type A theology is primarily in the enterprise of saving souls and extending the Church. Borrowing from Stephen Bevan's *Models of Contextual Theology,* type A also tends to see contextualisation either in terms of a "countercultural" model (with a fundamental suspicion against the greater culture) or a "translational" model (with a more positive view of culture but focusing on faithful transmission of the faith).[18] Type B sees

[18] Ibid, 47–49.

mission as a discovery of truth: “In that Truth lies salvation, already realised and present in human experience and human culture.” [19] Having this fundamental positivism towards culture, type B tends to have an “anthropological” model (with a basic trust in culture and its revelatory potential) or a “synthetic” model (with a mutual enrichment between the culture and Christianity). Though he is careful not to be absolute in his groupings, Justo González describes the basic trajectory of Western Christianity as historically weaving between these first two types of theology. The former is seen in Augustine (354–430), the Reformation and encompassing much of conservative Catholic and Protestant theology to the present day; the latter can be heard in the voices of Peter Abelard (1079–1142), Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), and the Social Gospel movement.

According to Justo González, Christianity also has a type C theology with Irenaeus of Lyon (c. 130–c. 200) as its main forefather. Irenaeus anthropomorphically identifies the Son and the Spirit as the two hands of the Father, describing the way God is intimately engaged in the world He created in both the Incarnation and the Holy Spirit. González describes type C as predominantly a theology of “history” with all the events of time pointing towards God’s purposes.[20] From creation on, God has had specific goals which have not been abandoned despite the presence of sin. The cosmos was created originally perfect, though it is unfinished and continues to grow and develop. For Irenaeus, sin is shared with the whole human race, not because it is inherited, but because we each live in corporate solidarity with the first humans. Radically different from present-day Western individualism, Adam was the “head” of humanity and through his act, all of humanity sinned. As a consequence, humanity was taken captive by Satan. The work of Christ, then, is primarily victory over the powers of darkness through recapitulation – he became a new head over a new humanity. Additionally, the eschatological hope for humanity comes from the work of the Incarnation: “He would

[19] Ibid, 61.

[20] González, 15.

become the Son of man for this purpose, that man also might become the son of God."[21] Irenaeus calls this process "divinisation" whereby the goal of human life is to be adopted as God's children and become more like the Creator.

Though historically absent in the West but prevalent in Eastern Orthodoxy, type C has seen new life in the last century through the eyes of Karl Barth (1886–1968), Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) and Latin American liberation theology. This emphasis on God's work through human history is why type C tends to embrace a contextual theology following the "praxis" model (with humans as co-creators in God's liberating work) or the closely related "transcendental" model (being faithful to dialogue with the history of the culture and Christianity).

It must be noted, however, that this typology does not exist without its blemishes. Some of the categorisation of Bevans and Schroeder, for example, appears to be quite erroneous. For example, they consistently regard Byzantine Christianity as a truth-oriented, type B theology for nearly two millennia until the 1980s when it finally began to exhibit some views consistent with a type C theology.[22] However, this comes at odds with González who clearly identifies Eastern Orthodoxy as the main bearers of type C theology until it is rediscovered in the West in the beginning of the 20th century. Additionally, Bevans and Schroeder are somewhat biased towards a Western worldview. Michael Nai Chiu Poon, a scholar at Princeton Theological Seminary on Asian Christianity, points out that *Constants in Context* utilises six historical periods that are not based on mission history, per se, but rather divisions based on major events in European and North American history like the discovery of the Americas and the French Enlightenment.[23] Likewise, he remarks that the social agenda identified by Bevans and Schroeder of today's world (e.g., ecological perils, satellite

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[21] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.10.2, *ANF* 1:424.

[22] Bevans and Schroeder, 130, 165, 229, 276, 296.

[23] Michael Nai Chiu Poon, "A Review from Asia," *Mission Studies* 22, no. 1 (2005):139–144.

communication, globalisation, and human rights) is less of a global nature as it is a concern of American liberalism.

While it would be incorrect to use this typology as a rigid framework to force upon the Chinese context, an adapted version of this system can be useful in dealing with the developments of contextual theology during the Chinese enlightenments. This is possible because Chinese Christianity is largely a reflection of the theological trajectories of the West as conveyed by Western missionaries and Chinese Christians educated in Western institutions. Yet, as we shall see in the next chapter, an adaptation is necessary due to a conflict experienced by Chinese Christians who must mediate between the two identities of "Christian" and "Chinese" – the latter of which is shaped by the socio-political context and the religio-philosophical tradition of the Chinese enlightenments.

The law-oriented theology of type A, for example, most significantly made contact with the Chinese peoples through the Protestant missionary enterprise of the 19th century. From Robert Morrison (1782–1834) to J. Hudson Taylor (1832–1905), the missionary zeal of that century echoed the cry of William Carey's (1761–1834) manifesto, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. It was a theology of soul-saving and church expansion. Not only was this the theology of foreign missionaries, but it was also preached by indigenous Chinese like the leader of the Taiping Rebellion (*Taiping Tianguo Yundong*), Hong Xiuquan (1814–1864), and May Fourth Enlightenment pastors and evangelists like Wang Mingdao, Watchman Nee and John Sung (Song Shangjie, 1901–1944). This theological type is also well preserved today in the Second Chinese Enlightenment among the conservative theology of many TSPM congregations and unregistered house churches (*jiating jiaohui*).

Type B theology first made its appearance in the Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) who wowed his way into the Chinese court through intellectual and cultural exchange. During Protestant missions of the late 1800s, this truth-based theology found a new home in the

social reformers of David Willard Lyon (1870–1949) of the YMCA and Timothy Richard (1845–1919). Some of the best representatives of type B theology in China are the May Fourth thinkers like L. C. Wu (Wu Leichuan, 1870–1944), the earlier theology of T. C. Chao (Zhao Zichen, 1888–1979) and Y. T. Wu. In the Second Chinese Enlightenment, certain scholars in Sino-Christian Theology like He Guanghu (1950–) and Zhuo Xinping (1955–) are perhaps the main representatives of thinkers who have gravitated towards a Chinese type B, truth-oriented understanding of Christianity.

Like matching bookends, type C theology has also made its way into China through the first record of Christian encounter in Nestorianism and, about 1300 years later, in the 1980s through K. H. Ting when he began to formulate his Cosmic Christ based on the work of process theologians and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Mirroring the theological trends of the West, Christianity in China has seen countless representatives of types A and B theology. But only a few major representatives in China can be identified with a type C theology.

How does the typology of González and Bevans–Schroeder compare with the earlier frameworks of understanding Chinese Christianity? Firstly, while Wang Mingdao was concerned with theological categories and others like K. H. Ting and Ralph Covell were concerned with social or cultural dispositions, Justo L. González, Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder are deeply concerned with both. This latter typology provides theological questions around five major topics of systematic theology (i.e., Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, salvation and anthropology). While each of these theological constants may not be equally weighted within the Chinese context, they do provide helpful categories to consider. Also, thanks to Bevan's models of contextual theology, the typology also provides a way of looking at how each theological type engages their specific context in the theological constant of "culture." This provides far greater granularity in understanding Chinese theology than the previous methods.

Another advantage of González is the fact that the earlier dualistic approaches have mainly focused on the development of May Fourth Protestant Christianity with origins in Western Protestant missionaries. González's typology allows dialogue with other Christian traditions like Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, as well as "heterodox" groups like Nestorianism and the Taiping Rebellion. If we were to crudely map González's typology with the earlier categories, type A would be roughly represented by fundamentalists and Daoist pietists while type B would for the most part entail modernists and Confucian activists. But González highlights the possibility of a type C theology that remains largely untested in China. Overall, this tripartite typology presents a framework that is useful to understand Chinese theology that has already existed and also brings additional dimensions to aid in the construction of new theologies for China.

As the Second Chinese Enlightenment continues to review the nature of Chinese culture through dialogue with traditional Chinese spirituality, type C theology becomes even more important. Julia Ching, in the introduction to her *Chinese Religions*, makes an interesting observation about Chinese traditional thought:

> Augustine's influence tended to be within Latin Christianity, whereas the Greek fathers, with their reliance on biblical allegories and mystical insights maintained a more positive role for human beings as divine images. In the Chinese context, we see a parallel in the focus on the Confucian striving for sageliness and the Buddhist quest for enlightenment.… In all cases, the belief in human perfectibility triumphed – with the mainstream Confucian position closer to the Byzantine one than the Latin, and with Pure Land Buddhism most approximating Augustine, and we may add, Luther and Calvin with their insistence on justification by faith alone.[24]

In his influential treatise against his contemporary Pelagius (c. 360–c. 420), the Latin church father Augustine describes humanity as inherently evil and with an utter need for the grace of God. Augustine's work has had a significant impact on Catholic and Protestant theology, particularly under type A. But Ching's argument is that Eastern Orthodox theology (type C) is much more compatible with the positive anthropology of traditional Chinese thought,

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[24] Ching, *Chinese Religions*, 7–8.

especially as seen in Confucianism and Buddhism. Several other scholars have echoed this sentiment by suggesting the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of deification or *theosis* (Θέωσις; the teaching that Christ has enabled a person to take on divine qualities) parallels the Chinese understanding of the perfectibility of humanity.[25] The overall absence of type C theology in China and Julia Ching's description of the spiritual agendas prevalent in the Chinese context warrants a reexamination of the theological encounters in the Middle Kingdom.

THEOSIS – A NEW CATEGORY FOR CHINESE THEOLOGY

From the above discussion, it is quite clear that type C theology is underrepresented in indigenous examples within Chinese history. Focusing on the Chinese enlightenments, the goal of this study will be to (1) understand how the three types of Chinese theology have responded to their respective contexts and (2) explore the Eastern Orthodox salvific view of *theosis* and its related subjects as a possibility in complementing or supplementing future developments in Chinese Christianity.

Using González and Bevans–Schroeder as a guide, the first objective will be accomplished through examining the key theological concerns of each representative against the context of the Chinese enlightenments. Often, these will revolve around traditional categories of systematic or contextual theologies (e.g., Christology, soteriology, anthropology and culture). These categories must be placed alongside comparable categories within the religious revival of the Second Chinese Enlightenment. For example, how does the

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[25] Robert C. Neville, *Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late-Modern World* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000), 164. Pan-chiu Lai, "Christian-Confucian Dialogue on Humanity: An Ecological Perspective," *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 14 (2004): 211. Su Yuantai (So Yuen Tai), "Ren Keyi Cheng Shen? Yishi Lun Jidu Zongjiao Yiyi Xia de Cheng Shen" [Can Human (sic) Become God? On Christian Deification], *Logos and Pneuma* 22 (Spring 2005): 201–229. Lai Pinchao (Pan-chiu Lai), "Jidu Zheng Jiao zhi Shenxue Fuxing Ji Gong Dui Hanyu Shenxue de Yiyi" [Renaissance of Orthodox Theology and its Significance for Sino-Christian Theology], *Logos and Pneuma* 32 (Spring 2010): 247–272.

While Wing-tsit Chan does not discuss *theosis* explicitly, he does point out that Chinese thought seems to conflict with type A Christianity's view of original sin (Wing-tsit Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China* [New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1953], 175).

Christian's view of sin compare with the positive anthropology of the Buddhist or the Confucian? But this also involves examining these responses against the social ideals of this period and understanding the cultural approach each tends to take (e.g., countercultural, synthetic and praxis).

The second objective of this study is a departure from conventional Christian theology within the West and China. Western and Chinese theologies have primarily followed a type A law-oriented theology or a type B truth-oriented theology. Although there may be other areas of Christianity that would be worth rethinking (e.g. spirituality and aesthetics), the focus here will be on the subject of salvation. Whether it be traditional Chinese religiosity's emphasis on self-perfection or the arguments of scholars in Sino-Christian Theology like Liu Xiaofeng (1956–) that the country needs to grow in her understanding of an otherworldly transcendent dimension, humanisation is at the core of China's *homo religiosus*. This echoes the thesis of Aloysius Pieris when he argues that theology in Asia tends to embrace "meta-cosmic religions" (or soteriological religions) in conjunction with "cosmic religions" (those that have a thisworldly emphasis).[26] Asian theology needs to engender both a thisworldly reality and an otherworldly, salvific dimension. So when looking at the construction of a Chinese theology, it becomes vitally important to examine the subject of salvation.

While *theosis* is a possible means of addressing the pursuits of the Chinese enlightenments, the soteriological solution must be understood in tandem with the existential problem it hopes to solve: sin. As we shall see in the next chapter, the optimism in Chinese anthropology will be challenged during the Second Chinese Enlightenment due to the overt presence of societal evils. Many Christians and scholars in Sino-Christian Theology would therefore look towards the doctrine of original sin as a possible explanation for the problem of evil. However, Eastern Orthodoxy teaches that a better hamartiology should be understood in

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[26] Aloysius Pieris, "Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation," in *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988 [1986]), 71–74.

terms of “ancestral sin” – a category that can provide a mediating voice between the anthropologies of Chinese optimism and Augustinian pessimism. A discussion of *theosis* and related concepts like “ancestral sin” may provide a strong theological foundation to help complement the Christian theological dialogue in present-day China.

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The chapters of this study will be divided into three major parts. In order to set the scene, the first part includes this present introduction and the next chapter which gives a detailed discussion about the Chinese enlightenments. This is necessary to understand the context in which Chinese contextual theology has developed and to highlight some of the directions it hopes to move. In the second part of the study, chapters two, three and four will examine representatives of each type of contextual theology from the Chinese enlightenments. This will help to highlight the theological landscape that has existed in China thus far and examine it based on the six constants presented by González and Bevans–Schroeder. Aware of the lacking of representatives in type “C,” the third and final part of this study, chapters five and six, will explore the potential of the salvific category of *theosis* and related subjects in addressing the trajectory of the Second Chinese Enlightenment.

In discussing the context, chapter one will include an analysis of both the May Fourth Enlightenment and the Second Chinese Enlightenment, with a particular focus on the latter. This will include the socio-political concerns, largely shaped by the search for modernity and nation-building, as well as the overall views of religion and philosophy. This chapter will also highlight the basic trends of Chinese contextual theology of the past century, including the growing field of Sino-Christian Theology. Finally, the chapter will bring the overall analysis together by highlighting the reality that a Chinese contextual theology must be diligent to dialogue with concerns old and new, including the two poles of the socio-political concerns of

the last century and the religio-philosophical traditions that have shaped millennia of Chinese thinking.

Chapter two will examine the type A theology of Watchman Nee. Earlier on, he was greatly influenced by the theology of a variety of Brethren, mystical and dispensational writers. By the 1920s, Nee grew in popularity as a famous evangelist and a prolific writer. Like many other type A Christians, many of Nee's teachings focused on the piety and spiritual formation of the individual. Expounding a trichotomous view of humanity, Nee taught that prior to the Fall, a person's spirit had the highest priority, controlling the soul which in turn controlled the body. However, due to the ravaging affects of sin, all went awry and the soul took control. He believed salvation involved deliverance from one's sins through the penal substitution of the cross and the restoration of the human spirit to its high place, with control given over to the Holy Spirit. Nee also had a well-developed, albeit controversial, ecclesiology. He was disillusioned about denominationalism and asserted that there could only be one true church in each city. Like Wang Mingdao and many other type A Chinese Christians, Nee later refused to join the TSPM on the grounds that doing so would identify oneself with communism and was later imprisoned. Even after his death, his impact is still widely felt by those who follow his legacy today. Along with the still prevalent, unregistered "Little Flock" (*Xiaoqun*) movement in China, his student Witness Lee (Li Changshou, 1905–1997) helped bring Nee's teachings to Taiwan and America. While there are many other representatives of type A theology, Nee is one of the most well known both inside and outside of China and his influence extends both Chinese enlightenments.

Chapter three will discuss the type B theology of a professor of philosophy at Yenching University and former president of the World Council of Churches, T. C. Chao. Echoing Origen's view that philosophy is the "handmaiden of theology," Chao was deeply interested in the contextualisation of Christianity in China and described Christian theology in terms of traditional Chinese religio-philosophical themes and ideas. As with other May

Fourth thinkers, he also rejected Christian doctrines that were deemed unscientific, including miracles like the virgin birth and bodily resurrection. Like Y. T. Wu and other type B Christians, Chao was sympathetic to the National Salvation movement in the 1920s and, embracing a moral exemplar view of atonement, championed Jesus' example as a great social reformer. He would experience a radical shift in his theology during the late-1930s when he was imprisoned by the Japanese when they occupied China. After this time, his writings began to bear signs of other theological types as he felt a greater need to emphasise the necessity of the grace of God. There have been many Chinese Christians who have gained interest in Chao in recent decades and, today, he is considered by many to be the foremost theologian in Chinese history. Since Chao straddles several theological types, this chapter will focus mainly on his earlier theology as a representative of type B theology. It will also challenge the viability of a simple transplant of the typologies of González and Bevans–Schroeder on the Chinese context and, as a result, require a modification of the parameters defined by the typology.

Chapter four will be on the type C theology of K. H. Ting. Ting was trained in the Anglican St. John's College in Shanghai and was later ordained an Anglican priest and bishop. He became active in the ecumenical movement in Canada, the United States and Switzerland. After the 1949 communist victory in China, Ting returned to his home country, became the president of the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and actively worked with his predecessor, Y. T. Wu, the first president of the TSPM. Ting lost all of his posts when the Cultural Revolution began but, when the TSPM was reestablished in the 1980s, he was appointed as its second president. From the 1980s forward, K. H. Ting began to develop his view of the Cosmic Christ based on the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Whiteheadian process theology. While Ting's emphasis on creation and redemption clearly falls in the realm of the history-base type C theology, his attacks against the teachings of "justification by faith" has come under much scrutiny by fundamentalists and other

conservative Christians. Nevertheless, K. H. Ting is the only major representative of type C theology in recent Chinese history.

In the final part of this study, we will look constructively at the possibilities of creating a new theology for the Second Chinese Enlightenment. Chapter five reviews the history of Chinese contextual theology and, despite the divergent trajectories, identify three categories present in all Chinese contextual theologies (i.e., sin, synergy and union). This will continue into chapter six which will look at the Eastern Orthodox understanding of *theosis*, with a particular emphasis on two of the greatest thinkers of Byzantine theology, Maximus the Confessor (580–662) and Gregory Palamas (1296–1359). Along the tradition of other type C Eastern Fathers, Maximus and Gregory did not see the consequences of the Fall as inherited guilt, but inherited mortality. The Incarnation, then, was fundamentally Christ's descent into suffering and humanity. But the Incarnation also marks an inverse process for humans in their attainment of God's nature. The Divine became human so that humans may become divine. Or, using the words of an ancient Chinese maxim *Tian ren heyi* – there is unity between Heaven and humanity. The main foci of chapter six will be on (1) the relevance of Eastern Orthodoxy to the religious revival of the Second Chinese Enlightenment and (2) its usefulness for the socio-political concerns of modernity and nation-building.

This will lead into the conclusion of part 3 and of this study. It will assess the usefulness of the typology formulated by Justo L. González and extended by Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder for the Chinese context. It will also provide a summary of an adapted typology of Chinese contextual theology across the two Chinese enlightenments. However, it is also important to note that bringing Byzantine theology into the academic discourse of Chinese contextual theology opens a host of new questions. Hence, this chapter will also suggest areas of further research that may be considered for additional development of the ideas presented herein.

LITERATURE SURVEY

Any study that entertains the broad field of "Chinese culture" must deal with millennia of diverse teachings, history, customs, and other presuppositions. Of the tomes of classical Chinese texts, the works that have highlighted some of the most important pieces of the mosaic are Wing-tsit Chan's (Chen Rongjie, 1901–1994) *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* and the updated, two-volume *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano.[27] Julia Ching has produced several fine works that have distilled much of China's spiritual heritage in her *Chinese Religions* as well as the volume she co-authored with Hans Küng entitled *Christianity and Chinese Religions*.[28] C. K. Yang (Yang Chingkun, 1911–1999) has also developed a helpful system for understanding religion in China in his *Religion in Chinese Society*.[29]

In the last few decades, we have also witnessed many developments in the academic discourse of religion in China. In particular, a number of international Confucian-Christian and Buddhist-Christian conferences have occurred in the last few decades. While proceedings have been produced for these conferences, many of the key presentations have also been published in journals like *Ching Feng* (Jing Feng) and *Buddhist-Christian Studies* which have resulted in additional scholarship by people like John B. Cobb, Jr. and John Berthrong.[30] There are also several monographs focused on the reforms of Humanistic Buddhism and New

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[27] Wing-tsit Chan, ed., *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963). Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard John Lufrano, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999–2000).

[28] Ching, *Chinese Religions*. Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1989).

[29] C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of their Historical Factors* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1991).

[30] John B. Cobb, Jr., *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982). John H. Berthrong, *All Under Heaven* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994).

Confucianism.[31] In the growing field of Sino-Christian Theology, a number of journals like *Ching Feng, Logos and Pneuma* (Dao Feng), *Sino-Christian Studies* (Hanyu Jidujiao Xueshu Lunping), *Christian Culture Review* (Jidujiao Wenhua Pinglun), *Regent Review of Christian Thoughts* (Jidujiao Sixiang Pinglun), etc., have become the main vehicles for academic discourse. Many of this scholarly work has also been published in a variety of collected volumes in both English and Chinese.[32] Finally, Fredrik Fällman has written an excellent monograph on the subject of Sino-Christian Theology and the closely related "Cultural Christian" (*wenhua jidutu*) phenomenon.[33]

In regards to studies about the social and cultural condition of China in the last century, the works of Tse-Tsung Chow and Vera Schwartz are among the best commentaries of the earlier period and Maurice Meisner and Xu Jilin provides a good analysis of the latter period.[34] Ci Jiwei and Rana Mitter have both provided intriguing analyses of May Fourth as a defining moment within Chinese history.[35] Primary source material can also be obtained from the influential May Fourth journal *Xin Qingnian* (New Youth) and, for the post-Mao period, journals and book series published by numerous groups like the Chinese Culture Academy,

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[31] Don A. Pitman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001). John Makeham, ed., *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination.* Umberto Bresciani, *Reinventing Confucianism: the New Confucian Movement* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies, 2001).

[32] Samuel D. Ling and Stacey Bieler, eds., *Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel* (San Gabriel, CA: China Horizon, 1999). Yang Huilin and Daniel H. N. Yeung, eds., *Sino-Christian Studies in China* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006). He Guanghu and Yang Xinan (Daniel H. N. Yeung), eds., *Hanyu Shenxue Duben* [Sino-Christian Theology Reader], 2 vols. (Hong Kong: Institute of Sino-Christian Studies, 2009). Pan-chiu Lai and Jason Lam, eds., *Sino-Christian Theology: A Theological Qua Cultural Movement in Contemporary China* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010). Miikka Ruokanen and Paulos Huang, eds., *Christianity and Chinese Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010).

[33] Fredrik Fällman, "Salvation and Modernity: Intellectuals and Faith in Contemporary China," (PhD thesis, Stockholm University, 2004).

[34] Tse-tung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960). Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment*. Maurice J. Meisner, *Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1999). Xu Jilin, "The Fate of an Enlightenment: Twenty Years in the Chinese Intellectual Sphere (1978–1998)."

[35] Ci Jiwei, *Dialectic of the Chinese Revolution: From Utopianism to Hedonism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994). Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Towards the Future School, Culture: China and the World committee and the Institute for the Study of World Religions.[36]

The history of the interaction between Christianity and Chinese culture stretches as far back as the first Nestorian mission to the Middle Kingdom during the Tang dynasty (618–907). Though more recent histories have come out by individuals like Bob Whyte, Tony Lambert, Alan Hunter and Kim-Kwong Chan,[37] one of the most well-respected histories on Christianity's encounter with China is by Kenneth S. Latourette, first published in 1929.[38] Two newer histories have been produced by respected historians of Chinese Christianity, one written by the Catholic Jean-Pierre Charbonnier and another by the Protestant Daniel H. Bays.[39] After "New China" was established by the Communist Party of China, all foreign missionaries were ousted out of the Middle Kingdom and all religious activities appeared to have ceased. Commentators of the Christian situation in China varied from David M. Paton's *Christian Missions and the Judgment of God*, Philip L. Wickeri's *Seeking the Common Ground*, K. K. Yeo's *What Has Jerusalem to Do With Beijing?* and David Aikman's *Jesus in Beijing*.[40] While John Fairbank, Daniel Bays, Richard Madsen, Edmond Tang and Jean-Paul Wiest have edited works that discuss more general themes of Protestant and Catholic

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[36] Liu Xiaofeng, "From Enlightenment to Exile," in *Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel*, eds. Samuel D. Ling and Stacey Bieler (San Gabriel, CA: China Horizon), 57–62.

[37] Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (London: Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1988). Tony Lambert, *The Resurrection of the Chinese Church* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991). Tony Lambert, *China's Christian Millions*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Monarch, 2006). Alan Hunter and Kim-Kwong Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[38] Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (London: SPCK, 1929).

[39] Jean-Pierre Charbonnier, *Christians in China: A.D. 600 to 2000*, trans. M. N. L. Couve de Murville (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2007). Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*.

[40] David M. Paton, *Christian Missions and the Judgment of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996). Philip L. Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988). Khiok-Khng Yeo, *What Has Jerusalem to Do with Beijing: Biblical Interpretation from a Chinese Perspective* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998). David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2003).

encounters with China,[41] a number of important monographs have been produced dealing specifically with the topic of the indigenisation of Christianity by Lee-ming Ng (Wu Liming), Wing-hung Lam (Lin Ronghong), Ralph R. Covell, Sumiko Yamamoto and Lian Xi.[42] The case studies in chapters two through four will include a number of additional resources as part of their actual analyses.

There has been much recent resurgence in Eastern Orthodoxy and studies on Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas. One of the first in the West to revive Maximian research was Hans Urs von Balthasar, followed by the work of Lars Thunberg.[43] John Meyendorff has written an excellent monograph on Gregory Palamas as well as one of the best theological and historical surveys on Byzantine theology available in English today.[44] There has also been much renewed interest in the ancient salvific view of *theosis*. From new interpretations of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), Martin Luther (1483–1546), John Calvin (1509–1564) and Karl Barth, to the growing interests of several more recent theologians, a serious reevaluation

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[41] John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974). Edmond Tang and Jean-Paul Wiest, eds., *The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993). Daniel H. Bays, ed., *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996). Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).

[42] Lee-ming Ng, "Christianity and Social Change: The Case in China, 1920–1950" (ThD thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1970). Wing-hung Lam, *Chinese Theology in Construction* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1983). Ralph R. Covell, *Confucius, The Buddha, and Christ: A History of the Gospel in Chinese* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986). Wu Liming (Lee-ming Ng), *Jidujiao yu zhongguo Shehui Bianqian* [Christianity and Social Change in China], 3rd ed. (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council, 1997). Lin Ronghong (Wing-hung Lam), *Zhonghua Shenxue Wushi Nian: 1900–1949* [A Half Century of Chinese Theology: 1900–1949] (Hong Kong: China Graduate School of Theology, 1998). Sumiko Yamamoto, *History of Protestantism in China: The Indigenization of Christianity* (Tokyo: Tōhō Gakkai, 2000). Lian Xi, *Redeemed By Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).

[43] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003). Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, 2nd. ed. (Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1995). A survey of modern scholarship done by Western Christians can be found in Aidan Nichols, ed., *Byzantine Gospel: Maximus the Confessor in Modern Scholarship* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993).

[44] John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory* Palamas, 2nd ed., trans. George Lawrence (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974). John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, rev. 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1983).

of Western soteriology is under way.[45] When dealing with Eastern Orthodox theology and China, it would be valuable to look at works on the presence of the Russian branch of the Orthodox church in China.[46] However, though there are a few histories dealing with the Orthodoxy in China, little research has ever been done dealing with Chinese and Byzantine theologies.[47]

ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

This research deals with both ongoing work in the academia as well as several new contributions. One of the first major academic outcomes of this study is to bring into a larger discussion the topic of the Chinese enlightenments and the role religion and philosophy has played and continues to play in it. This includes the ancient religio-philosophical heritage of China (including, but not limited to, Confucianism, Chinese Buddhism and Daoism) as well as the religions and philosophies of external sources which have found prominence in China in later days (particularly, Protestantism and communism). This discussion will also highlight

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[45] A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999). Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005). Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998). Julie Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010). Adam Neder, *Participation in Christ: An Entry Into Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009). Brian D. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (El Cajon, CA: Emergent YS, 2004). Robert V. Rakestraw, "Becoming Like God: An Evangelical Doctrine of Theosis," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 40*, no. 2 (June 1997): 257–269. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *One with God: Salvation As Deification and Justification* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004). Myk Habets, *Theosis in the Theology of Thomas Torrance* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2009).

[46] Eric Widmer, *The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Peking During the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976). Zhang Sui, *Dongzhengjiao he Dongzhengjiao zai Zhongguo* [The Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church in China] (Shanghai: Xuelin Publishing, 1986). Dina V. Doubrovskaia, "The Russian Orthodox Church in China," in *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future*, eds. Stephen Uhalley Jr. and Xiaoxin Wu (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 163–176. Kevin Baker, *A History of the Orthodox Church in China, Korea, and Japan* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006). Alexander Lomanov, "Russian Orthodox Church," in *Handbook of Christianity in China: 1800 to the Present, Vol. 2*, ed. R. G. Tiedemann (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 193–211, 553–563, 826–835.

[47] Two notable studies have been the fore-mentioned Su Yuantai, "Can Human (sic) Become God? On Christian Deification" and Lai Pinchao, "Renaissance of Orthodox Theology and its Significance for Sino-Christian Theology," both published in the journal *Logos and Pneuma*.

the distinctions between the Chinese enlightenments as built upon two prior models, one from France and the other from Germany. It is within this context that we shall see how the developments of the discipline Sino-Christian Theology has been shaped by enlightenment ideals and continues to move forward in hopes to be a shaper of enlightenment pursuits.

A second academic outcome shall focus on the present lack of any comprehensive evaluation of past Christian encounters in China. Many studies have been conducted surveying the theology of various foreign and Chinese Christians. But, there has not yet been any systematisation of Chinese theology at this level. The intent is to provide a more thorough framework of understanding. The use of a representative for each type gives an initial mapping of the landscape of Chinese theology. It helps to clarify the theological responses and approaches to the Chinese context. This study will produce a new framework of understanding that provides greater opportunity for analysing contextual theology in China.

This will inevitably reveal a third academic outcome – namely, to see how useful this tripartite typology is in the Chinese context. Justo González has developed a fairly new and useful typology. With the exception of a brief discussion on Latin American liberation theology, González focuses his work mainly on Christianity as found in Western context.[48] Likewise, Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder, though they have extended González's work to the missions field, have mainly focused on the missionary enterprise rather than discuss indigenised or contextualised theologies. Hence, this third academic outcome shall be to test this typology in the very concrete situation of the Chinese context.

But, fourthly, beyond presenting a typology, this study seeks to also provide the possibility of a new approach to Christianity in China. Christianity in the West and China have predominantly followed theological models A and B. What has been largely missing and

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[48] However, Pope Benedict XVI has once stated that certain forms of liberation theology were invented by intellectuals born or educated in the "rich West." So, arguably, even Latin American liberation theology is born from another "Western" context. Joseph Ratzinger and Victorio Messori, *The Ratzinger Report: An Exclusive Interview on the State of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1985), 186.

underdeveloped is theologies of type C, with perhaps the notable exception of K. H. Ting. This typology offers us a view of areas lacking within Chinese theology and the possibility of construction. Additionally, the organisational methods of Wang Mingdao and K. H. Ting were designed with the intention of attacking opposing views. Ting is often attacked as being a heretic and stooge for the communist party. But in this typology, I claim that K. H. Ting belongs under the same type C category as Maximus the Confessor and Gregory Palamas. Yet both Maximus and Gregory are revered as saints in the Eastern churches, with the former being venerated also by the Roman Catholic Church. While some may see this categorisation of so-called “heretics” and “saints” in the same group as a weakness, this approach gives a means to understand the theology of an individual without the influence of foreign labels or stereotypes. So the fourth and final major academic outcome of this study is to see how a type C theology built upon Eastern Orthodoxy and subjects around the doctrine of *theosis* can fair in the Chinese context. Byzantine theology is a departure from the historical approaches to the Chinese context. However, they do have the ideological resources that can help compliment the dominant Western theology in responding to the spiritual crisis of the Second Chinese Enlightenment.

1. THE CHINESE ENLIGHTENMENTS

The last century has been a turbulent period of China's history. October 10, 1911 marked the beginning of a revolution to overthrow millennia of monarchial rule and to establish China in a new age. Many saw the Qing dynasty as impotent and unable to protect China from foreign, colonising powers. Under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan, 1866–1925), known by many as the father of modern China, a new republic was to be born. The decades to follow consisted of a growing sentiment against all that was seen to hinder the advancement of China. Science, rational thinking and egalitarian values were championed while "non-scientific" religious and philosophical ideologies were laid victim to a spirit of iconoclasm. Though this breadth of independent thinking would wane due to civil war and subsequent communist dominance, a second major wave of intellectual ferment developed again in the 1980s.

In contrast with the earlier years, the final decades of the 20th century were more sympathetic to spiritual traditions – from both China's past and Western sources. Ideological enemies of the past became friends for the future. After the founding of the republic in 1911, China's spiritual foundations were destroyed; it was not until the latter period that people in China *en masse* began to rebuild these foundations and look for ways to solve this spiritual crisis. Christianity, in particular, has seen significant growth in China and many thoughtful individuals have sought the sinification of this foreign religion. However, any solution hoping to have a long-term impact in China must deal with both the turmoil of the last hundred years and with the country's millennia-old, religio-philosophical heritage.

WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?

"Enlightenment," Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) declares, "is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity.… This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere Aude!* Have courage to use your *own* understanding!"[1] Writing about events in Europe, Kant believes that a person's ability to reason is often bound by the rules and formulae established by an authority figure. We should not bow down to any monarch or ecclesiastical leader or any other individual. The spirit of enlightenment empowers the individual to know, understand and judge for him or herself. For some time, the "Age of Enlightenment" has been described as a monolithic movement in Europe.[2] However, recent scholarship has challenged this notion arguing that "The Enlightenment" should be better understood as several "enlightenments." English, German, French, American, Scottish, etc. – each national approach has responded to a variety of historical and social issues unique to its particular context.[3]

Chinese thinkers in the turn of the 20th century became most interested in the French expression of enlightenment as opposed to any other.[4] This was largely due to the perception that the French situation 150 years prior was similar to China in the early 1900s. French monarchs were accused of extravagance and corruption that led France into bankruptcy. Qing monarchs were blamed for there inability to strengthen China militarily and economically.

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[1] Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. H. S. Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 54.

[2] Paul Hazard, *The European Mind, 1680–1715* (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company, 1963). Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1967).

[3] A collection of essays discussing several national enlightenments can be found in Roy Porter and Mikulás Teich, eds., *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). Also see J. G. A. Pocock, "Enthusiasm: The Antiself of Enlightenment," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 60, no. 1 & 2 (1997): 7–28 and Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French, and American Enlightenments* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2005).

[4] Chow Tse-Tsung, *The May 4th Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 341–342.

Both courts ruled by divine right – for the French, this was legitimised by Christianity while for the Qing, it was authorised through the Confucian Mandate of Heaven (*Tianming*). This resulted in feudalistic tendencies that enslaved human liberties and intellect. The French Enlightenment and subsequent revolution sought to free the individual from such bondage, making France one of the first ancient societies to enter the modern era. France embraced egalitarian values, scientific rationalism and a broad spectrum of liberal thought. After seeing the failures of the Qing court and the fledgling republic, Chinese intellectuals looked at the progress of the French Enlightenment with great promise for their own country. The May Fourth revolutionary Chen Duxiu (1879–1942), for example, was greatly impressed by the French during his time of studies in France. He would later publish an article entitled "The French and Modern Civilisation" in the first issue of his Shanghai periodical *Xin Qingnian* (also entitled in French *La Jeunesse* – meaning, "New Youth"). In this article, he argues that, due to post-enlightenment values of human liberties that released the individual from slavery and gave privileges to the masses, French civilisation is far more supreme than the civilisations of Germany, England and Russia.[5] Perhaps through another enlightenment, a "Chinese Enlightenment," can China too obtain modernisation.

May Fourth Enlightenment

Even before the 20th century, many in China had been pursuing a goal they called "national salvation" (*jiuguo*). In the mid-1800s, China had been fighting against foreign oppressors and seeking to build a stronger and more prosperous China. The methodology formulated by the Confucian reformers was to have *zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong* (Chinese learning for essence, Western learning for application) – or, as a shorthand, *zhongti xiyong* (Chinese essence, Western application). They hoped to solve their problems by harnessing the

[5] Chen Duxiu, "Falanxiren yu jinshi wenming" [The French and Modern Civilisation] in *Xin Qingnian* 1, no. 1 (1915), trans. Stephen C. Angle and Marina Svensson, in *The Chinese Human Rights Reader: Documents and Commentary (1900–2000)* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), 62–66.

technological strength of the West within a Chinese – or more accurately, a Confucian society.[6] Shortly thereafter, Japan became another invader and the failures of the dynasty became quite clear. In the 1911 revolution, Sun Yat-sen and others believed the Manchu monarchy was in the way of achieving true national salvation. Then, the new republic fought with the Allies in the first World War, hoping that German-occupied regions of China would subsequently be returned. However, at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, these lands were instead given over to Japan. Protests led by students and intellectuals erupted throughout the country on May 4, 1919 and gave rise to what became known as the May Fourth movement (*wusi yundong*) or the Chinese Enlightenment (*zhongguo qimeng*). This made clear for many that the 1911 revolution was not enough for China's national salvation. In order to move farther, she needs more than a new regime – China needs a new mindset. The prerequisite for national salvation was enlightenment (*qimeng*).

To emerge from a "self-incurred immaturity," many Chinese scholars felt that science and reason needed to replace the authority of tradition and superstition. Previously, Confucianism was used by the monarchy to define hierarchical relationships and to provide a framework for moral norms. By the May Fourth movement, the Confucian court had already been overthrown but the Confucian mindset was still present. Like the anti-Christian and anti-feudal sentiment of the French Enlightenment, the downfall of Confucianism was the next logical step for the Chinese Enlightenment. Chen Duxiu argued that China needed to embrace two Western ideals in its quest for enlightenment, personified as "Mr. Democracy" and "Mr. Science":

> In order to advocate Mr. Democracy, we are obliged to oppose Confucianism, the codes of rituals, chastity of women, traditional ethics, and old-fashioned politics; in order to advocate Mr. Science, we have to oppose traditional arts and traditional religion; and in order to

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[6] Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 5.

> advocate both Mr. Democracy and Mr. Science, we are compelled to oppose the cult of the "national quintessence" and ancient literature.[7]

The earlier Confucian generation sought reform through marrying Western technologies with Chinese essence. In contrast, reformers like Chen believed that traditional Confucian learning was the major culprit of China's failures. Fruits of modernisation in the West, democracy and science, were esteemed as capable replacements for the traditional values of Confucianism.

This iconoclasm would quickly spread to other spiritual traditions. Many saw religious belief as a superstitious remnant of pre-scientific feudalist societies and judged them based on their usefulness in reforming the society. [8] Buddhism had more validity if embraced as a philosophy rather than a religion and by emphasising a rationalistic disposition.[9] Jesus was an admirable philanthropist and social reformer but Christianity was identified with foreign imperialism and its doctrines and miracles were unscientific.[10] Hence, while there were secular reformers who wanted to write off China's spiritual heritage, there were also religious reformers who negotiated with modernity by embracing rationalism and humanism, giving rise to movements which some have called New Confucianism (*xin rujia* or *xin ruxue*) and Humanistic Buddhism (*renjian fojiao*). In many ways, some of these religious reformers were trying to once again follow the mid-1800s pattern of *zhongti xiyong* by marrying Western modern methods with a Chinese religious core. There were even some Christian reformers, borrowing from European and North American modern liberal theology, who sought to use Christianity as an ideological means to justify China's social reconstruction.[11]

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[7] Chen Duxiu, "Our Answer to the Charges against the Magazine," *Xin Qingnian 6*, no. 1 (January 1919): 10–11; quoted and translated by Chow Tse-Tsung, *The May 4th Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 59.

[8] Chow Tse-Tsung, 320–322.

[9] Don A. Pitman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 28–29.

[10] For a detailed discussion of the anti-Christian movement, see Tatsuro Yamamoto and Sumiko Yamamoto, "The Anti-Christian Movement in China, 1922–1927," *The Far East Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (1953): 140–143.

[11] Samuel D. Ling, "The Other May Fourth Movement: The Chinese 'Christian Renaissance,' 1919-1937," (PhD thesis, Temple University, 1980).

Despite these attempts, all religions were inevitably attacked as incompatible with the future of China.

Beyond skirmishes with various spiritual traditions, intellectuals also fought the perceived injustices of Chinese society. One example was the shift in the Chinese written language from *guanhua* (bureaucratic language), the language of the literati, to *baihua* (vernacular language), the language of the common person. *Baihua* was the medium of choice during the May Fourth movement for hundreds of periodicals to protest and demand change.[12] It would also be adopted by a variety of disciplines including literature, history, geography, industry and science.[13] In order to have a modern society, China needed a modern language to articulate modern ideas for the average person. The May Fourth Enlightenment also brought upon the emancipation of women by banning foot-binding, establishing coeducation, and giving rights of suffrage and property inheritance.[14] Some argued for public child care to allow women to be free to work and not be dependent on their husbands for their livelihood. Others championed "independent love" – the ability to freely marry a person of choice and freely divorce when love waned.[15] The embrace of a new language, new rights for women and new understandings of love and family transformed a Confucian hierarchical society into one of equal rights for all members of the society.

In pursuit of nationalism, scientific rationalism, atheism and egalitarian values, this period also saw the introduction of a new political ideology: communism. For Marxist interpreters, the closeness in time between the 1919 May Fourth protests and the 1921 founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was no accident. In 1940, Mao Zedong (1893–1976) described his view of two distinct historical periods demarcated by May Fourth

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[12] Hu Shih, *The Chinese Renaissance: The Haskell Lectures, 1933* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 48, 56–57.

[13] Milena Dolezelová-Velingerová, "The Origins of Modern Chinese Literature" in *Modern Chinese literature in the May Fourth Era*, ed. Merle Goldman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 20–22.

[14] Chow Tse-Tsung, 257–259.

[15] Kazuko Ono, *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution: 1850–1950*, ed. by Joshua A. Fogel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 102–105.

in the important speech, “On New Democracy.” To quote the future leader of China at length, Mao writes,

> Before the May 4th Movement, the struggle on China’s cultural front was one between the new culture of the bourgeoisie and the old culture of the feudal class. The struggles between the modern school system and the imperial examination system, between the new learning and the old learning, and between Western learning and Chinese learning, were all of this nature.… However, because the Chinese bourgeoisie lacked strength and the world had already entered the era of imperialism, this bourgeois ideology was only able to last out a few rounds and was beaten back by the reactionary alliance of the enslaving ideology of foreign imperialism and the “back to the ancients” ideology of Chinese feudalism….
>
> But since the May 4th Movement things have been different. A brand-new cultural force came into being in China, that is, the communist culture and ideology guided by the Chinese Communists, or the communist world outlook and theory of revolution.… The new political force of the proletariat and the Communist Party entered the Chinese political arena, and as a result, the new cultural force, in new uniform and with new weapons… launched heroic attacks on imperialist culture and feudal culture.…
>
> Prior to the May 4th Movement, China’s new cultural movement, her cultural revolution, was led by the bourgeoisie, which still had a leading role to play. After the May 4th Movement, its culture and ideology became even more backward than its politics and were incapable of playing any leading role; at most, they could serve to a certain extent as an ally during revolutionary periods, while inevitably the responsibility for leading the alliance rested on proletarian culture and ideology. This is an undeniable fact.[16]

The earlier period struggled between an old culture of feudalism and a new system based on Western capitalism and liberal democracy (or, as Mao puts it, “bourgeois democracy”), ultimately allying China with foreign imperialism. Particularly, he saw the bourgeois activity as navigating between two systems of learning – the *zhongti xiyong* of Western learning and Chinese learning. Yet the bourgeoisie failed. Fortunately for China, so he declares, May Fourth began a new era led not by the feudal class or bourgeoisie, but by the proletariat. This would initiate a new cultural revolution based on proletarian culture and ideology.

When communism established the new People’s Republic in 1949, Mao and other Marxist interpreters saw this as the natural course of the May Fourth movement – Communist China was the ultimate fulfilment of the Chinese Enlightenment. But this utopian reality was true only for those who aligned themselves with Marxist ideals and submitted to the party’s ideological straitjacket. The following decades consisted of communist programmes like the anti-rightist movement and the Cultural Revolution that decimated innumerable “liberal

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[16] Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong), “On New Democracy,” *WMT* (1940) 2:371–372.

bourgeois" and swiftly silenced any dissenting voice. These and other factors destroyed the progress made a generation earlier, abruptly halting the work of enlightenment. Yet China's desires would not remain dormant. Another day would come for the Chinese Enlightenment to awaken and continue where May Fourth left off.

Second Chinese Enlightenment

The end of the Cultural Revolution and the death of Mao Zedong marked the end of utopian totalitarianism. As Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997) rose to become the preeminent leader of China, the CPC began to open the door to differing views. By the end of 1978, Deng and his colleagues announced a new programme of Four Modernisations (*sige xiandaihua*): agriculture, industry, technology and defence. Like the strides of the Confucian reformers a century earlier, Deng's change in policy established a framework where China could thrive militarily and economically, setting the stage for a "socialist market economy" (*shehuizhuyi shichang jingji*). Towards this goal, party officials encouraged debate to free people from dogmatic thinking engendered during Mao's regime. Like the May Fourth Enlightenment, by the early 1980s, China entered a new stage of intellectual ferment. The earlier period faulted Confucian orthodoxy for its "self-inflicted immaturity," but this latter period would inevitably blame Maoist orthodoxy for the country's backwardness. There would be continuity with some of the themes introduced during the May Fourth Enlightenment. However, the 1980s–1990s would have its own distinct qualities and would be described by some sinologists as the "Second [Chinese] Enlightenment" (*di er ci qimeng*) or the "New Enlightenment movement" (*xin qimeng yundong*).[17]

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[17] Xu Jilin, "The Fate of an Enlightenment: Twenty Years in the Chinese Intellectual Sphere (1978–1998)," trans. Geremie R. Barné and Gloria Davies, in *Chinese Intellectuals Between State and Market*, eds. Edward Gu and Merle Goldman (London: Routledge, 2004 [1998]), 183–203. Edmond Tang, "The Second Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and Christianity Today," in *Identity and Marginality: Rethinking Christianity in North East Asia*, eds. Werner Ustorf and Toshiko Murayama (Frankfurt am Main; New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2000), 55–70.

The Second Chinese Enlightenment saw many rise up and demand for a true cultural revolution – critiquing the decades prior, passionately re-examining China's intellectual framework and exploring possibilities in foreign theories in social sciences and humanities. Ideas that had been imprisoned for the previous three decades began to come alive once again, engaging thoughts hidden while China was under a government-imposed captivity. In the 1980s, intellectuals of various disciplines established academic think tanks such as the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (*Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan*) and the International Academy of Chinese Culture (*Zhongguo Wenhua Shuyuan*) to produce a number of influential journals and participate in rethinking the culture of China.[18] Though it began as a discussion amongst academics about tradition and modernity, this *wenhua re* (cultural fever) propagated to the masses through novels, poems and dramas. One such case was the six-part documentary *River Elegy* (*He Shang*), broadcasted in 1988 on the government-sponsored Chinese Central Television. Later cited as a major cause of the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations, *River Elegy* harshly declared that an isolated China would result in a dead China. Provocatively using the cultural icons of the Yellow River and the Great Wall, *River Elegy* insisted that the Middle Kingdom could not succeed by being self-contained and inward-looking. Instead, China must break down its cultural walls and burst forth into the ocean. This imagery vividly declared that China could succeed – but only if she were willing to engage the other great cultures of the world.

While the May Fourth Enlightenment tended to see faith and the supernatural as contrary to the development of a modern society, the 1980s–1990s were less tentative about religion and spirituality. Along with Mr. Science and Mr. Democracy, a third ideal began to

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[18] Examples of some of the more influential journals that began production were *Reading, Towards the Future* and *Culture: China and the World*. Edward X. Gu, "Cultural Intellectuals and the Politics of the Cultural Public Space in Communist China (1979–1989): A Case Study of Three Intellectual Groups," *Journal of Asian Studies 58*, no. 2 (May 1999): 389–431.

develop in the last decades of the 20th century and into the 21st century: Mr. Religion.[19] In 1982, the communist government released an important policy change expressed in a directive entitled "The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period" – commonly known as "Document 19."[20] In this document, the CPC relaxed its stand on all religions, acknowledged their prevalence in the Chinese population and gave a basic protection of the freedom of religious belief. While the policy change gave preferential treatment to atheism, its loosened stance ironically resulted in an upsurge in converts to Buddhism, Protestantism, Catholicism and other religions resulting in what has been called a *zongjiao re* (religious fever).

What has caused this revival of religious interest? One commentator has explained that this shows many of these "new" converts were in fact believers who practised in secret during the 1960s–1970s.[21] After the policies changed in the early 1980s, these underground practitioners chose to publicly live out their faith. This resulted in a perceived surge in religious belief. Another scholar explains that this occurred due to the draconian attempts of the atheistic government to squash all religiosity.[22] The people of China would witness firsthand the great evil humanity could offer. Yet, this also created a spiritual vacuum that could now be filled with religion. With the relaxing of government policy, the spiritual vacuum of China could now be filled by religion. The sociologist Xu Jilin (1957–) points out that although the *zongjiao re* began in the 1980s, this revival in religions has continued into

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[19] Jørgen Skov Sørensen, "Christian Theology and Intellectuals in China A Historical and Theological Introduction," in *Christian Theology and Intellectuals in China*, ed. Jørgen Skov Sørensen (Århus, Denmark: University of Aarhus, 2003), 14–15.

[20] An English translation of the "Document 19" can be found in Donald E. MacInnis, *Religion in China Today: Policy and Practice* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989), 8–26.

See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (London: Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1988), 384–389; Tony Lambert, *The Resurrection of the Chinese Church* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), 52–63.

[21] Li Liang, "Researches into the Present Circumstances of Protestant Christianity in China: A Sociological Analysis of Christianity in the Nanyang District of Henan Province," *China Study Journal* 9, no. 2 (August 1994): 9.

[22] Merle Goldman, "Religion in Post-Mao China," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 483 (January 1986): 156.

the 1990s and the 21st century. Along with the changes in policies and religious freedom experienced in the early 1980s, Xu Jilin identifies three other reasons for the this *zongjiao re*:

> Second: as the collective socialism advocated by Mao Zedong collapsed, Chinese society is becoming more and more individualistic, its dispersed and atomised lifestyles meaning [*sic*] that personal relationships lack linkage with basic emotions, culture, and spiritual convictions, so religions play an important role in restructuring community in this increasingly individualised society. Third: the market-economy society [since the early 1990s] has destroyed a familiar life which has a past and a future; keenly competitive structures push people out of being able to control their own fate; they become fearful of the unpredictable future and hence choose to rely on all kinds of gods and spirits to protect their own lives. Finally, the loss of core social values has brought about a spiritual crisis: people generally look for certainty in values and action, while the supernatural world depicted in religious beliefs provides ultimate values and thus conveys a clear definition of the meaning of life and ethical standards.[23]

Ever since the death of Mao Zedong, Chinese society has continued on a downward spiral where individuals feel lost in a maelstrom of social, financial, and existential reordering of life. Yet it is this spiritual crisis that has continued to add fuel to the Second Chinese Enlightenment's *zongjiao re*.

Even within the academia, intellectuals from all disciplines began to become sympathetic to religion. Many of these "Cultural Christians" (*wenhua jidutu*) and "Cultural Buddhists" (*wenhua fojiaotu*) sprung up where anti-religious sentiments once prevailed a few generations earlier.[24] One so-called "Cultural Christian," Liu Xiaofeng (1956–), has argued that a fundamental need within China is to reformulate the transcendent dimension of Chinese culture.[25] Chinese religiosity historically emphasises the perfectibility of human beings through self-effort.[26] But national salvation was focused on replacing China's spiritual and

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[23] Xu Jilin, "Spiritual Crisis and Renaissance of Religions," in *China and Christianity: A New Phase of Encounter?* eds. Felix Wilfred, Edmond Tang and Georg Evers (London: SCM Press, 2008), 45.

[24] There is a bit of a debate over whether the term "Cultural Christian" is appropriate for the group of intellectuals interested in Christianity. Since not all of these academics profess to be followers of Christianity, some prefer to use the term "Scholars in Mainland China Studying Christianity." Chen Cunfu and Edwin Hui, "The Phenomenon of 'Cultural Christians': An Overview and Evaluation," in *Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel*, ed. Samuel D. Ling and Stacey Bieler (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1999), 83–136.

[25] Min Lin and Maria Galikowski, *The Search for Modernity: Chinese Intellectuals and Cultural Discourse in the Post-Mao Era* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 143–156.

[26] Wing-tsit Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1953), 249–261. Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood As Creative Transformation* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1985), 19.

moral systems with Western scientific rationalism. Liu believes that both scientific rationalism and Chinese religiosity rely too much on the natural world. China needs to learn from Christianity, look beyond this world and into the transcendent world for the ultimate basis of human existence. Zhuo Xinping (1955–), a research fellow at the government think tank Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, agrees with this assessment. For Zhuo, any reform that is void of an otherworldly reality cannot be maintained because it has limited power and lacks momentum.[27] Whereas Chen Duxiu and his colleagues championed a secularised reform of China, Second Enlightenment thinkers like Liu Xiaofeng and Zhuo Xinping argue that the modernisation of China must happen within the context of a desecularised reality.[28]

Intellectuals of the Second Chinese Enlightenment did not only look towards the West for ideas to reform China, many also looked at their East Asian neighbours. The industrial advancement of Japan and the "four little dragons" (*si xiao long*; South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore) since the second World War has been attributed by some to a "Confucian ethic."[29] Responding to Max Weber's (1864–1920) thesis that the apparent success of capitalism can be attributed to the "Protestant ethic," the East Asian work ethic identifies relationships, authority and education as contributors to economic success. The Confucian ethic provides an intellectual, cultural and moral basis for economic development and avoids the ills of Western capitalism like individualism and corruption.

By the early 1980s, the industrial success of these Eastern regions was a curious phenomenon for Mainland China, the birthplace of Confucianism. Despite the earlier iconoclastic stance, some within China began discussing the inherent value of the ideology for modernising China. During a highly publicised celebration of Confucius' 2,540th birthday in

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[27] Zhuo Xinping, "The Significance of Christianity for the Modernization of Chinese Society," *CRUX* 33, no. 1 (March 1997): 35.

[28] Yang Fenggang, "Between Secularist Ideology and Desecularizing Reality: The Birth and Growth of Religious Research in Communist China," *Sociology of Religion* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 101–119.

[29] Tu Wei-ming, "A Confucian Perspective on the Rise of Industrial East Asia," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 42, no. 1 (Oct. 1988): 32–50. Arif Dirlik, "Confucius in the Borderlands: Global Capitalism and the Reinvention of Confucianism," *boundary 2* 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 229–273.

October 1989, Jiang Zemin (1926–), the paramount leader of China at the time, made a surprise appearance. He spent two hours recalling his Confucian upbringing and giving praise to the head of the Confucius Foundation.[30] The next administration, under President Hu Jintao (1942–) and Premier Wen Jiabao (1942–), would in 2005 echo Confucian themes in the announcement of the new socio-economic vision for China to work towards becoming a "Harmonious Society" (*hexie shehu*). In these latter years, Confucianism's value has been centred around its usefulness for social and economic reforms in China. The Second Chinese Enlightenment brought back to life a former enemy that was once buried in the graveyard of premodern ideologies.

In the mid-1990s, the economic success of China brought upon a greater level of self-confidence and a revival in nationalism. Though the society began to face new problems bred through consumer materialism, China's newfound prosperity has been seen as a victory after over a hundred years of reforms. The national salvation of May Fourth came in response to China's failures, but these latter years saw a growth in nationalism as a result of the country's successes. This was seen vividly as the authors of the 1996 book *China Can Say No* (*Zhongguo Keyi Shuo Bu*) voiced their disenchantment with the United States. They blamed the United States for things like China's rejection from the World Trade Organisation, losing the bid for hosting the 2000 Summer Olympics and Washington's ongoing military support for Taiwan's complete independence. The book asserted that China was an independent nation and did not need the United States to police the world. Citing the injustices felt by many, this book became a bestseller and spurred on the publication of several like-minded, nationalistic books. This nationalism highlights the reality that throughout her tumultuous history, China has been deeply introspective, interested in understanding and believing in herself.

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[30] Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard John Lufrano, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Volume II: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2000), 581.

Prevailing Challenges

The Second Chinese Enlightenment continued the May Fourth Enlightenment's revolt against China's "self-incurred immaturity." One found itself fighting the feudalistic tendencies it carried from thousands of years of monarchial rule; the other was fighting the totalitarian tendencies of thirty years. Despite the different historical contexts, the revival of several themes throughout the last century indicates that some of China's basic concerns have remained the same.

One such theme that appeared in both periods has been the subject of identity. Intellectuals of the May Fourth Enlightenment would be in search of a new meaning of being "Chinese," engage in a quest for modernisation and have a desire to change the fundamental essence of her culture. When compared against the tiny island Japan, China would suffer from a sense of inferiority as the two countries were on the verge of war. She would also have a love–hate relationship with the Western nations – viewing them as "foreign devils" ready to colonise at any moment while still holding the keys to modernity. With the advent of the Second Enlightenment, China was a lost society that just came out of the treacherous Cultural Revolution. This would also be a period characterised by debates on what is meant to be "Chinese," how China could modernise and how to shape the essence of Chinese culture. Her relationship with the foreign nations would again be love–hate. However, towards the later years of the Second Enlightenment, China's economic strength would improve her self-image. No longer would she be pushed around – the 21st century would be the "Chinese Century."

A second theme that cropped up in both periods was the subject of religion and spirituality. Since one of the ideals of the May Fourth Enlightenment was "Mr. Science," all religiosity was inevitably attacked due to their "unscientific" characteristics. A growing number of the religious faithful began to emphasise rationalism and humanism to be relevant

in China's new social condition. But the attack on all these ideologies prevailed and, by the time of the Cultural Revolution, many would have given up their faith, fled to another country, been forced into the underground, imprisoned or killed. After the Cultural Revolution, the Second Chinese Enlightenment arose to champion a new ideal: Mr. Religion. New Confucianism, Humanistic Buddhism and a Chinese form of Modernist Christianity – all born during the May Fourth period – would find new vitality in the latter period.[31] For Christianity, while Modernist Christians were forerunners of some Second Chinese Enlightenment academics in Christian studies, many converts since the 1980s can be traced back to the heritage of more conservative May Fourth Christians that steered clear of social involvement and emphasised individual piety like Wang Mingdao (1900–1991), Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng, 1903–1972) and John Sung (Song Shangjie, 1901–1944). For a generation that could still recall the pains of the Cultural Revolution and, now, consumer materialism, the doctrines of conservative Christianity has offered hope and escape. So, while the earlier period desired to rid China of all religiosity, the latter period was highly interested in how religiosity could help China's society and people.

Another theme has been the question of morality. For the May Fourth Enlightenment, feudalism was the main source of immorality felt in China. Though the monarchy was already dethroned, the feudalistic tendencies of Confucianism still remained. Justice could only prevail when Confucianism and all irrational superstitions were abolished from China. Some reformers of this first period would also see foreign nations as representing another form of feudalism – namely, imperialism. While Confucianism itself provided a framework

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[31] Song Xianlin, "Reconstructing the Confucian Ideal in 1980s China: The 'Culture Craze' and New Confucianism," in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. John Makeham (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 81–104. Alan Hunter and Kim-Kwong Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 219–235. Ji Zhe, "Secularization as Religious Restructuring: Statist Institutionalization of Chinese Buddhism and Its Paradoxes," in *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, ed. Mayfair Mei-hui Yang (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 233–260. Fredrik Fällman, "Salvation and Modernity: Intellectuals and Faith in Contemporary China," (PhD thesis, Stockholm University, 2004), 20–30.

for moral norms, the removal of this ideology required a new moral framework to be developed. The Second Chinese Enlightenment, in contrast, came away from a totalitarian period when many lives were crushed in the name of communism. China would also begin a period of economic growth that resulted in consumer materialism. To many, China had completely lost its moral compass. Seeing the apparent success of Confucianism in industrial East Asia, the ideology transformed from being China's greatest enemy to one of her closest friends. For others, a different ally was found within Western Christianity – only a moral foundation from outside the natural world could be a viable solution for China. Ever since the founding of the republic, China has sought to rebuild her moral foundations and has once again looked at domestic and foreign ideologies for inspiration. While some have attempted to revitalise the ancient *zhongti xiyong* methodology of a century and a half ago, most have maintained a more tempered approach to the understanding of culture.

The view of culture in both these enlightenments has played a critical role in Chinese ideological reflection. The Confucian reformers of the 19th century wanted to marry Western methods and technology with the essence of Chinese (or Confucian) society. Then during May Fourth, many reformers believed that modernisation could only be achieved through a full Westernisation. This would change in the Second Chinese Enlightenment when thinkers have been more careful in their assessment of Chinese culture. There has already been a host of ideas imported from the West, even its religiosity. Others believed that "China Can Say No." As showcased in the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China has made a global impact with technologies like gunpowder, paper-making and, now, spaceflight. The festivities also highlighted China's spiritual heritage with Confucian disciples, Buddhist fairies and tai chi chuan (*taijiquan*) masters of popular Daoism. Representing each of the three major teachings of China (*sanjiao*), ideologies that were once considered obsolete are now embraced as core components of Chinese culture. While she continues to pursue the goals of modernisation, the reality is that China cannot be rid of her past. China has had a

long spiritual heritage that has shaped her identity as a people and a nation. But this legacy includes at its very core what anthropologists call *homo religiosus*. Despite the Chinese Communist Party's emphasis on atheism and attempts to secularise China, the upsurge of spirituality after the Cultural Revolution points to something quite the contrary – the essence of Chinese culture includes an inclination towards religion and religious practice. The traditional emphasis on perfection through self-effort is not simply to improve the status of an individual alone. Chinese culture fundamentally is inclined to a religiosity that pursues the reform of the world through the reform of the individual. The desire for China to lead the world is therefore a desire that encompasses the essence of her culture.

During the two Chinese enlightenments, China has sought to reform itself to become a global contributor and leader. Reformers, in the name of modernity, suppressed certain aspects of its spiritual heritage. But the resurrection of religiosity in China shows that what was apparently destroyed with the advent of the republic was in fact quite essential to the very nature of China. As the Second Chinese Enlightenment continues into the 21st century, the spiritual profile of China will inevitably grow and change. But this is also a spiritual profile that must be in dialogue with its rich history. Any response to China's spiritual crisis cannot simply dismiss her past but must be ready to engage it with great care and respect. Only in such a partnership can China's spiritual journey truly flourish.

CHRISTIAN RESPONSES

The last century has been a precarious time for religion and spirituality in China. The May Fourth Enlightenment challenged Christians to think more critically about their faiths in the context of modernity. Then, after communism took over China in 1949, all religions were eventually suppressed and driven underground. After the 1980s and into the new millennium, the number of converts to all religions had significant growth. Protestant Christianity in

particular increased from approximately 235,000 Chinese believers in 1912[32] to over a staggering 40 million adherents in 2007 (estimates, however range from as few as 10 million to as high as 130 million).[33] This phenomenal rate of growth has made Protestant Christianity a significant player in China's spiritual ecosystem. But, how did Chinese Christians respond to the issues raised during the two Chinese enlightenments?

The Making of a Chinese Religion

Early on, the May Fourth Enlightenment raised questions about national and cultural identity. For many Chinese Christians, this meant changing the relationship between foreign organisations and the Chinese churches and resulted in the debates around the development of an indigenous church (*bense jiaohui*).[34] One attempt, spawned off from the Edinburgh 1911 World Missionary Conference, was the creation in the 1920s of supra-denominational coalitions like the National Christian Council and the Church of Christ in China formed through the combination of several Protestant denominations. Borrowing from the three-self principles (self-propagation, self-government and self-support) of Henry Venn (1796–1873) and Rufus Anderson (1796–1880), the goal of these new ecumenical organisations was to move towards greater independence from foreign missionaries. For other Chinese Christians, this was insufficient and progress was too slow – a complete separation from foreign denominationalism was in order. As a result, several independent church movements like the

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[32] Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1929), 680.

[33] Two independent surveys reported the same estimate in 2007. Wu Jiao, "Religious Believers Thrice the Estimate," *China Daily*, 7 February 2007, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-02/07/content_802994.htm, accessed on 12 November 2009). Mark Ellis, "China Survey Reveals Fewer Christians than Some Evangelicals Want to Believe," *ASSIST News Service*, 1 October 2007, http://www.assistnews.net/STORIES/2007/s07100011.htm, accessed on 12 November 2009.

[34] Daniel H. Bays, "The Growth of Independent Christianity in China, 1900–1937," in *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, ed., Daniel H. Bays (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 307–316. Sumiko Yamamoto, *History of Protestantism in China: The Indigenization of Christianity* (Tokyo: Tōhō Gakkai, 2000), 323–368.

True Jesus Church (*Zhen Yesu Jiaohui*), the "Little Flock" (*Xiaoqun*) and the Jesus Family (*Yesu Jiating*) came into being during the 1920s–1930s.

The Second Chinese Enlightenment would be a much different time. Bishop K. H. Ting (Ding Guangxun, 1915–), the head of the reinstated Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), would in the 1980s declare that China has reached a post-denomination era (*hou zongpai shiqi*). This did not mean that the historical ecclesiastical or theological characteristics were no longer active. After all, some communities would continue to hold worship services on Saturdays, regarding it as the Sabbath, while others would gather for communion on Sunday evenings as was common among former "Little Flock" congregations. However, ever since the 1950s and 1960s, all denominational affiliations were put to an end. Moreover, the only legal reality for the church was to be registered through the TSPM. In contrast to the indigenisation concerns of earlier generations, K. H. Ting believed the best way to address the national and culture identity of the Second Chinese Enlightenment was to focus on the Christian's relationship with the communist party. Hence, since 1998, Ting has been exhorting TSPM Christians of all disciplines to engage in a process of "theological construction" or "theological reconstruction" (*shenxue jianshe*) in order to "adjust" Christianity to better "adapt" to socialism.[35]

However, the Second Chinese Enlightenment has also witnessed a growing number of scholars at secular Chinese universities and research institutions with an interest in the growing field of Sino-Christian Theology (*hanyu jidu shenxue*) or Sino-theology (*hanyu shenxue*). Initially, this term was used in the late-1980s to refer narrowly to the work of the earlier mentioned "Cultural Christians" like Liu Xiaofeng and He Guanghu (1950–). Following the rubric of Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923), Liu Xiaofeng argues that China had

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[35] Philip L. Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China: K. H. Ting and the Chinese Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 344.

three types of churches: *kirche, sekte* and *mystik*.[36] The former two are represented by the institution of the TSPM and the more sectarian unregistered house churches (*jiating jiaohui*), respectively. The last, the mystical church, is represented by Cultural Christians who, according to Liu, have faith commitments but do not hold any denominational affiliation and are often not part of any local church community.[37] At the time, Sino-Christian Theology developed through the humanities and social sciences and included Christians and non-Christians who turned to Christianity as a useful means to address concerns of the Second Chinese Enlightenment. However, since the mid-1990s, there has been a new generation of scholars of Christian studies in China with stronger faith commitments who, in contrast with their predecessors, wanted to develop a theology for the church.[38] While Sino-Christian Theology has often been narrowly described as including the theological thinking of the so-called Cultural Christians, it has more recently been broadly used to refer to any theology written in the Chinese language, as reflected in the Chinese version of the name: *hanyu jidu shenxue* (i.e., "Chinese language theology").[39]

Hence, Christianity across both Chinese enlightenments have ventured to explore ways in which Christianity can be understood as more than a foreign ideology, but a true Chinese religion. On the one hand, these endeavours must address questions raised by contemporaries about one's cultural and nation identity, and concerns around modernity and nation-building. On the other hand, the task needs to grapple with China's religious and philosophical heritage. Whether intentional or not, Chinese Christians of the last hundred years have made strides towards the development of a Chinese contextual theology.

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[36] Fredrik Fällman, "Salvation and Modernity," 113–116.

[37] Liu Xiaofeng, "Sino-Christian Theology in the Modern Context," in *Sino-Christian Studies in China*, eds. Yang Huilin and Daniel H. N. Yeung (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 63.

[38] He Guanghu, "Three Generations of Chinese Christian Researchers: from the 1950s to 2007," in *China and Christianity: A New Phase of Encounter?* eds. Felix Wilfred, Edmond Tang and Georg Evers (London: SCM Press, 2008), 67–68.

[39] Pan-chiu Lai, "Sino-Theology as a Non-Church Movement: Historical and Comparative Perspectives," in *Christian Presence and Progress in North-East Asia: Historical and Comparative Studies*, eds. Jan A. B. Jongeneel, et al. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 94–96.

Conflicted Identities

In his *New Catholicity*, Robert Schreiter makes the helpful observation that despite the homogenising affects of globalisation, theological movements tend towards an ethnification or, in the context of China, a sinification.[40] While China since the 1990s has quickly been enveloped by globalisation, there has also been the important rediscovery of a cultural identity lost prior to the Second Chinese Enlightenment and even prior to Chen Duxiu's 1920 publication of the *Communist Manifesto* in Chinese. Therefore, against the dual risks of diluting either the catholicity of the gospel or the particularity of the local culture, a Chinese contextual theology must find a rootedness in both identities.

As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, secular reformers of both Chinese enlightenments have wrestled with the question of what it means to be "Chinese." For Chinese Christians, the question of identity would be even more complicated. No longer is it framed in terms of being "Chinese" as opposed to "Western" or some other ethnic or regional delimiter, but it now must be extended into a different cultural reality of "Christianity." The identity must somehow bring together identities to form a hyphenated or hybridised identity of "Chinese Christian." During May Fourth, it was debates about the nature of the indigenous church; for the Second Chinese Enlightenment, it has come about through Sino-Christian Theology and K. H. Ting's agenda for theological reconstruction. Whatever shape it comes, Chinese Christians have needed to mediate between these two identities.

On the "Chinese" side of the equation, we have primarily seen engagement with ideologies likes Confucianism and communism and with the contemporary concerns of modernity. In general, type A, law-oriented Christians tended to shun away from these local expressions and articulated a counter-cultural approach to China. The fundamentalism of

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[40] Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 23–25.

Wang Mingdao, for example, primarily argued that there could only be a single, authoritative understanding of Christianity. Yet at the same time, type A Christians of May Fourth agreed with their contemporaries, both type B Christians and secular reformers, that the tyranny of foreign denominationalism needed to be usurped by Chinese leaders. They would therefore establish independent churches and denomination-like structures.

A more positive engagement with China's cultural concerns can perhaps be seen in the other types of Chinese theologies. In the type B, truth-oriented theologies of individuals like L. C. Wu (Wu Leichuan, 1870–1944) and T. C. Chao (Zhao Zichen, 1888–1979), they tended to identify Confucianism as the essence of Chinese culture and tried to marry the gospel with the ancient ideology. In contrast, Y. T. Wu's (Wu Yaozong, 1893–1979) type B theology and K. H. Ting's type C theology have attempted to mediate between the state and the church, leading both to become strongly disposed towards the dominant political ideology of communism. This latter approach has served an important purpose in the survival and development of the Chinese church. However, the Second Chinese Enlightenment has seen the decline of communist dogmatism and attempts to reconstruct China's pre-May Fourth cultural identity. Hence, while it may not have been wise for T. C. Chao and Wu Leichuan to focus on Confucianism during such a precarious time, K. H. Ting's focus on communism in today's China can likewise be quite dangerous. Moreover, today's revival of China's traditional teachings has once again placed the ancient ideology of Confucianism (and other traditional Chinese teachings) in an important place for the academic discourse of Chinese contextual theology.

On the "Christian" side of the equation, what we find is that Christianity is primarily identified with Western or Latin forms. For example, the type A theologies of Watchman Nee and Wang Mingdao, with their emphasis on divine law and human sin, borrow heavily from pietist and dispensational traditions. In contrast, type B Chinese theologians like T. C. Chao and Y. T. Wu saw the gospel as aspiring for social reconstruction more than for spiritual

reconstruction, and national salvation more than individual salvation. Their main methodological approach was to extrapolate the essence of the Christian tradition and to baptise it within the Chinese cultural and socio-political scene. While type A Chinese theologians followed the conservative trajectory of Western Christianity, type B Chinese theologians have continued down the path of Western liberal theology, especially after Immanuel Kant, that has tended to reject Augustine (354–430) and espouse the moral abilities of human society and cultures.

Likewise, K. H. Ting's type C theology follows the lead of other Chinese theologies by its reliance on Latin Christianity. For Ting, his main theological resources have been in process or evolutionary theologies that claim God to be changing and in process within the space and time of the natural world. While type B liberal theologies can be seen as a reaction against Augustine pessimism in humanity, the works of type C Western theologians like Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955), Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), John B. Cobb (1925–), etc. that Ting bases his theology on can be seen as a reaction against the scholastic view of God as immutable and impassible.

As we continue in this study, we will explore more closely three major representatives of Chinese Christianity. Doing so, we will be able to notice the tendencies to navigate this difficult road and address this as both "Chinese" and "Christian" – two seemingly divergent identities. Yet an underlying question that also exists is whether Eastern Orthodoxy has resources useful in mediating these two extremes.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder have identified six theological "constants" with which Christians in any context must engage: Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, salvation, anthropology and culture. However, as we continue in this study, it will become

evident that not all of these are of major importance within Chinese contextual theology. Rather, the theological questions that have arisen from the Chinese context have been guided by very different ideological parameters, both in terms of the socio-political reality and the religio-philosophical legacy. While we will reserve our modified list of theological concerns for the concluding chapter of this study, it is worth mentioning that the theological issues raised during the last century have tended to focus on two aspects of theological anthropology: the human condition and the human response.

At the very core of Christian teachings on theological anthropology is the question of the human condition. This concern has continued to be prevalent within Chinese Protestant Christianity largely due to the influence of Latin Christianity. Its prevalence, of course, was seen both in the missionaries who traveled to China and in the Chinese Christians who were educated inside and outside of the country. It is perhaps for this reason that, during the May Fourth Enlightenment, the fundamentalist–modernist debate of the West was so important in China. The theology of Chinese Christians borrowed heavily from the frameworks of their Western predecessors. On the one hand, Augustine's influence on the conservative theology of Christian leaders like Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee predisposed them to understand human nature as fundamentally evil. On the other hand, many type B Christians were influenced by European enlightenment philosophers who were baffled by the doctrine of original sin and believed each individual should be responsible for his or her own actions. Hence, May Fourth Enlightenment Christians like T. C. Chao and Y. T. Wu agreed with French and German enlightenment thinkers who saw a pessimistic anthropology as something that would unnecessarily hinder human social progress and, in the case of China, national salvation.

This emphasis on the "sinful nature" continues to exist today during the Second Chinese Enlightenment. Particularly, while foreign denominations no longer exist as they once did, the majority of Chinese congregations today continue to maintain the conservative

type–A legacy of their predecessors. Hence, the dominant theological orientation of both TSPM congregations and house churches is fundamentalism or evangelicalism, emphasising the depravity of humanity and the need for individual salvation. However, for K. H. Ting, teachings on "sin" and "justification by faith" formed unnecessary barriers between Christians and non-Christians. As many Chinese Christians emphasised humanity's sinful nature, Ting would speak about the "sinned against." Chinese Christianity has found a need to base itself in Latin Christianity's understanding of human nature – whether this means to embrace it wholeheartedly or to attack it as unnecessary and counterproductive for the gospel.

Anthropology has likewise been vitally important in Chinese Christianity due to the overt attention it is given in Chinese philosophy and religion. Confucius (Kongzi, 551–479 BC), for example, is described as being the source of the Chinese disposition towards "religious humanism." Wing-tsit Chan (Chen Rongjie, 1901–1994) writes:

> [T]he humanistic tendency had been in evidence long before his time. But it was Confucius who turned it into the strongest driving force in Chinese philosophy. He did not care to talk about spiritual beings or even about life after death. Instead, believing that man "can make the Way (Tao) great," and not that "the Way can make man great," he concentrated on man. His primary concern was a good society based on good government and harmonious human relations.[41]

Hence, many of the early debates between the Confucians Mengzi (c. 372–c. 289 BC) and Xunzi (c. 310–237 BC) revolved around human nature and its tendencies and how this impacts human relationships and vice versa. But this disposition is not limited to Confucianism but includes the sinicised import of Chinese Buddhism. The Chinese branch of Mahāyāna Buddhism, for example, holds that all sentient beings possess the buddha-nature (*foxing*) and have the capacity to obtain enlightenment (*puti*). What we see is that teachings from throughout China's philosophical and religious history emphasise both the goodness and the potentiality of human nature. So as Christian missionaries brought Augustinian teachings

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[41] Wing-tsit Chan, ed., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 15. See Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (London: MacMillan Press, 1993), 51–52.

of original sin to China, the darkness of humanity needed to contend with optimistic anthropologies of both the West and the East.

Finally, theological anthropology is at the fore of theological discussions in China because it has been a society which has experienced great turmoil, wreaked by war and conflict. Questions around the human condition are extensions of questions around the social condition. Yet this has also beckoned questions about how the individual is to respond – what is the moral responsibility of the Christian? Despite the dire state of Chinese society at the beginning of the twentieth century, May Fourth revolutionaries were confident that real change was possible in China. The fervour of secular reformers spread to type B Christians like T. C. Chao and P. C. Hsu (Xu Baoqian, 1892–1944) who, in the 1930s, left the ivory tower to participate in countryside projects that sought rural reconstruction. However, "Christ against culture," type A Christians focused on otherworldliness rather than thisworldliness and individual salvation rather than national salvation. So while the moral response of some Christians focused on social action, other Christians looked to escape any responsibility in society with the exception of converting souls.

In contrast, the Second Chinese Enlightenment has been born and reared in a time when Chinese society has experienced great moral evil and, in many ways, has lost its moral compass. Hence, type A Christians and the pessimistic anthropologies have continued to be a prevalent voice since China's reopening in the 1980s. Yet, as we shall see in chapter five, the problem of evil has become a topic discussed by scholars in Sino-Christian Theology – mainly by embracing the once-hated doctrine of sin. Rather than being understood in terms of the existence of evil and the existence of a good and omnipotent God, the main tension is between the existence of evil and the existence of a good and omnipotent humanity. Due to the optimistic anthropology of Chinese philosophy and religion, the problem of evil is a subject of anthropodicy (i.e., justifying the goodness of humanity) – not theodicy (i.e., justifying the goodness of God).

The two enlightenments were moments of deep introspection for many individuals, Christians and non-Christians alike. While the theological categories of Bevans–Schroeder were known and discussed by Chinese Christians, the social and spiritual questions of the Chinese context have inevitably been translated into somewhat different theological ones. As we continue into the next three chapters, we shall examine more closely three significant Chinese thinkers representing these three types of Chinese theology. While this will help to map the Chinese theological scenery, it will also identity the major hills and valleys which each theologian has needed to overcome in the developments of his own respective contextual theology.

2. WATCHMAN NEE'S SPIRITUAL MAN

The first of the Chinese theologies to explore in this study shall be that of Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng, 1903–1972). While he is often described as working towards the "indigenisation" of the gospel, it is perhaps not common to identify Nee's thinking as a representative of Chinese "contextual theology" – one that responds to the social, political and economic questions of the particular historical moment. He was not very original in his theology, borrowing and adapting many of his ideas from Western Christians, mainly originating from the United Kingdom. His teachings were primarily expositions on the Bible and did not have any overt Chinese characteristics – rarely making mention of Chinese culture, philosophy or religion and never speaking directly to the mounting social and political troubles of his day. For example, in 1927, Nee published his most important work *The Spiritual Man* while based in Shanghai, the home of many activities surrounding the anti-Christian movement (1922–1927). Several of his contemporaries like L. C. Wu (Wu Leichuan, 1870–1944), T. C. Chao (Zhao Zichen, 1888–1979), Y. T. Wu (Wu Yaozong) and P. C. Hsu (Xu Baoqian, 1892–1944) would write about the influence of the 1920s on their respective intellectual journeys.[1] But Nee found no need to make mention of the anti-Christian movement or other aspects of the May Fourth enlightenment in his writings. As a result, with over 50 texts and published addresses translated, his works have been well received by many Western Christians.

However, it would be inaccurate to say that Watchman Nee's theology did not address the concerns of his context, at least indirectly. Rather than making Western religious practices relevant to the Chinese culture and context like T. C. Chao or Y. T. Wu, Watchman Nee wanted to equip Chinese Christians to live out the universal teachings of the Bible. The

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[1] Sumiko Yamamoto, *History of Protestantism in China: The Indigenization of Christianity* (Tokyo: Tōhō Gakkai, 2000), 134–138.

Christian is to overcome the temporal concerns of his or her context with the absolute concerns of the gospel. Like other type A, law-oriented theologies, this approach to the broader context has been variably described as "Christ against culture" or the "countercultural" model of contextual theology.[2]

In the previous chapter, we saw how many May Fourth intellectuals attempted to respond to China's political unrest and social upheaval with nationalism, a new moral framework and a new culture. But was this the correct answer or approach? Instead of answering the questions of the May Fourth Enlightenment directly, Watchman Nee focused himself on articulating a theology of living out the spiritual life. While we will discuss this further later in this chapter, it is worth mentioning that his countercultural theology came largely through a rearticulation of two schools of fundamentalist thinking: Keswick sanctification and Brethren dispensationalism.[3] From the former, Nee believes that people rely too much on the power of one's own natural abilities (what he calls the "latent power of the soul"). He describes these Christians as "carnal" because they are overcome by the flesh. As the physical world in China was collapsing, Watchman Nee preaches that the "overcomer" Christian has overcome the flesh (rather than be overcome by it) and has access to an ultimate strength in a life filled with the Holy Spirit.[4] This is closely tied with his eschatology, as developed from Brethren dispensationalism. Nee believes that at the eschaton, there will first

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[2] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, exp. ed. (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2001), 45–82. Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 117–137.

[3] Keswick sanctification and holiness, also known as the "Victorious Life" movement in the United States, comes from yearly conventions beginning in 1875 held in the resort town of Keswick in the Lake District of northern England. The dispensationalism of the Brethren movement was popularised in the mid-1800s through the writings of individuals like J. N. Darby, George Müller and, in the early-1900s, through C. I. Scofield's reference Bible. Steven Barabas, *So Great Salvation: The History and Message of the Keswick Convention* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1952). Charles W. Price and Ian M. Randall, *Transforming Keswick: The Keswick Convention, Past, Present and Future* (Carlisle: OM, 2000). H. A. Ironside, *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1942).

Church historian George Marsden believes these two schools played significant roles in the growth of religious revivalism in American. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006) 72–73

[4] Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man* (New York, NY: Christian Fellowship Publishers, [1928] 1977), 1.67–68.

be a partial rapture of “overcomer” Christians, a period of tribulation when “carnal” Christians are purified and are part of a subsequent, second rapture.[5] His message is one of condemnation against those who trust in the latent power of the soul. In a way, Nee declares the demise of May Fourth humanism and its adulterous relationship with many in the institutional church. The solution he offers is for the conversion of all who are carnal, both Christians and non-Christians.

Watchman Nee’s approach to his social context can be seen more directly in his views on denominationalism. Among many issues, Nee disagreed with the hierarchical structures of foreign missionary societies. They almost always failed to cultivate Chinese leadership and, when locals were raised up, they were often subordinated under foreign counterparts.[6] Additionally, with few exceptions, many missionaries maintained Western living styles and standards. [7] In contrast with these alien missionaries, Nee had the right skin colour, manners, culture and language.[8] In response to the growing nationalism and anti-foreign sentiment of the May Fourth enlightenment, many congregations that were originally established by missionaries and foreign denominations joined to form coalitions that would be independent from foreign control. But in reality, much of the hierarchy and financial subsidy from foreign entities remained.[9] Instead, the approach of other Chinese leaders like Watchman Nee was to establish denominationally-independent churches, built and led exclusively by Chinese Christians.[10] As we will see later in this chapter, Nee would justify his stance based on

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[5] Norman H. Cliff, “The Life and Theology of Watchman Nee: Including a Study of the Little Flock Movement Which He Founded” (MPhil diss., Open University, 1987), 266–271.

[6] Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, “Watchman Nee and the Little Flock Movement in Maoist China,” *Church History* 74, no. 1 (March 2005): 74–76.

[7] David M. Paton, *Christian Missions and the Judgment of God*, 2nd. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 67.

[8] Cliff, 118–119.

[9] Some examples of cross-denominational coalitions included the Church of Christ in China (*Zhonghua Jidujiao Hui*) and the National Literature Association (*Zhonghua Jidujiao Wen She*). Daniel Bays, “The Growth of Independent Christianity,” in *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, ed. Daniel H. Bays (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 308–309. Yamamoto, 59–96.

[10] This ranged from Wang Mingdao’s large Christian Tabernacle in Beijing, to movements like the Jesus Family and the True Jesus Church.

Brethren theology. Nevertheless, this was a countercultural approach that sought to provide an alternative to a "missionary culture" that supposed foreign primacy over local leadership. Nee's ministry within China, known by outsiders as "Assembly Hall" (*Juhuichu* or *Juhuisuo*) or "Little Flock" (*Xiaoqun*), grew to more than 700 churches and 70,000 members in 1949.[11] Though it was one of the largest church movements in China of his time, he would never call it a denomination. Nee teaches that the New Testament model asserts the existence of one church for each locality and, consequently, did not believe that any congregation needed a name as a unique identifier. Names and denominations were unnecessary labels that divided the church rather than unified it.

It is important to note that while he was critical of denominations, Watchman Nee did not break his relationships with foreign Christians. In fact, he was deeply influenced by foreigners like the British missionary Margaret E. Barber (1866–1929) and, later, the former Baptist pastor T. Austin-Sparks (1888–1971).[12] He also had many close relationships with Christian communities within England and the United States. Rather than being critical of foreigners in general, Nee had reservations about the way foreign Christians viewed their Chinese counterparts. In the early 1950s as foreign missions were coming to an end under the communist regime, Nee and several Little Flock colleagues had a meeting with leaders of the missionary organisation, China Inland Mission. When asked how missionaries could best serve the Chinese church in the future, Nee responded, "First of all… provide us with Bible

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[11] Wing-hung Lam, "Nee, Watchman," in *A Dictionary of Asian Christian*, ed. Scott W. Sunquist (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 590. Leslie Lyall, *Three of China's Mighty Men: Leaders of the Chinese Church Under Persecution*, rev. ed. (Kent, UK: OMF International, 2001), 67.

[12] Margaret E. Barber worked with the Church Mission Society (CMS) in Fuzhou in 1899–1909. While she was on furlough in England, she was baptised by immersion by David M. Panton of Surry Chapel in Norwich. She was forced to leave the CMS and returned to China in 1920 as an independent missionary. Barber introduced Watchman Nee to the writings of David M. Panton, Jessie Penn-Lewis, T. Austin-Sparks, Andrew Murray, Madam Guyon, J. N. Darby and others, many of whom would significantly shape his theology.

T. Austin-Sparks was a former Baptist pastor who was closely related to Jessie Penn-Lewis and her speaking ministry. He helped to found the Honour Oak Christian Fellowship Centre in London and published the bi-monthly magazine *A Witness and a Testimony*. Watchman Nee was first introduced to T. Austin-Sparks' writings that Margaret Barber shared with him, but would finally meet the man in 1938. He would also help Nee to publish several of his works in English in subsequent years.

commentaries. You have so many and we have so few. Translate Bishop Lightfoot's commentaries, for example, and other similar works. And then, when you can come back again, come not as evangelists but as teaching elders in our local churches. You will receive a very warm welcome."[13] On the one hand, Nee wanted foreigners to understand their role as equippers rather than proselytisers. But even more important than that was his desire for Chinese Christians to be strengthened through biblical teaching. For Watchman Nee, contextualisation was the work of empowering the Christians in China to be equals, not inferior to Christians in the West.

THE SPIRITUAL MAN

At the very core of Watchman Nee's theology is his understanding of human nature. His most important text, and one that is most comprehensive in articulating his theological anthropology, is *The Spiritual Man*. In this three-volume treatise, Nee begins by describing the human composition as a trichotomy (i.e., spirit, soul and body) as opposed to what he considers the more commonly viewed theological anthropology of his day of a dichotomy (i.e., soul and body). The body is one's connection with the world, the spirit is one's connection with the Holy Spirit and the soul is the life and personality that was formed when God brought together a person's body and spirit. From this basis, Nee then argues that one of the main tasks of the Christian is to learn to divide the soul from the spirit (Hebrews 4:12). Much of this, as has already been briefly mentioned, enables a person to overcome the flesh, dethrone the latent power of the soul and to be empowered by the spirit. According to Nee, this "spiritual" Christian is in perfect reliance on one's spirit and its connection with the Holy Spirit. As shall be discussed further, for Watchman Nee, this spiritual theology is central not

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[13] Quoted in Lyall, 94–95. A slightly different account of this event is recorded in Angus Kinnear, *Against the Tide: The Unforgettable Story Behind Watchman Nee*, rev. ed. (Eastbourne, UK: Kingsway, 2005), 249.

only in his understanding of human nature but also the church and its relationship with the world.

The Constitutional Nature of Humanity

The idea of a trichotomous anthropology is not unique to Watchman Nee. This division of human composition originated from Platonic metaphysics that focused on the relationship between a person's "body" (σῶμα or σάρξ) and "spirit/mind" (πνεῦμα/νοῦς) as an analogy for the relationship between the material universe and the creator-god. One's body and spirit come in communion with one another through an intermediary – a third element known as the "soul" (ψυχή). Taking this Hellenistic framework and partnering it with certain Pauline writings (notably, 1 Thessalonians 5:23), many early Christians adopted the trichotomous anthropology. This gained popularity among the Greek Church Fathers of the Alexandrian school – Clement (c. 150–c. 215), Origen (185–232) and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335–395).[14] With some variation, it enabled the Greek Fathers to point to the spirit as the means of communicating with God, the body as the physical part of a person and the soul as the place of one's personality, encompassing his or her intellect, emotions and will. During the 4th century, trichotomy came under attack when it was closely affiliated with Apollinarianism, condemned as part of the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople (381).[15]

Despite this, later Eastern writers continued to uphold the trichotomous view, many of whom used terminology closer with the Platonic understanding (i.e., "body," "soul" and "mind" rather than "body," "soul" and "spirit"). The Eastern Orthodox scholar John

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[14] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941), 191–201.

[15] Apollinarianism, the theology traced back to Apollinaris of Laodicea (c. 310–c. 390), held that Christ took on a human body and a human soul but not a human spirit. The 4th century church anathemised this and concluded that what Christ does not take on is not redeemed. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1978), 289–309. G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1962), 208–209.

Meyendorff argues that this is largely through the Platonic influence of Origen on the latter Byzantine writers.[16] However, Henri de Lubac spends a tremendous amount of time arguing that Origen, while influenced by Platonic philosophy, takes his trichotomy from the Apostle Paul rather than from Plato. Therefore, de Lubac argues, Origen never uses the word νοῦς in relation with trichotomy but always uses the word πνεῦμα.[17]

In contrast with the Greek Fathers, the Western or Latin Fathers followed the teachings of Tertullian (c. 160–c. 220) and Augustine (354–430) and favoured the position of dichotomy. Under this view, a person was composed of two components, a "soul" and a "body;" the "spirit" was merely another term that expressed the same idea as the "soul." Partly due to the problems caused by Apollinarian trichotomy, dichotomy was an alternative embraced by many in the Western church clear through the time of the Reformation. It was not until the 19th century that several Protestant theologians and spiritual writers began to reexamine the trichotomous position.[18] For example, the devotional writer and early-Keswick speaker Andrew Murray (1828–1917) taught that the soul, the seat of "self-consciousness," was originally designed to be subject to the spirit, the seat of "God-consciousness." Therefore, sin should be understood as simply self-assertion with "the soul refusing the rule of the spirit to gratify itself in the lust of the body."[19] Distinctions between the respective natures and functions of the soul and spirit once again grew to importance within the Western

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[16] John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, rev. 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1974), 141–142.

[17] Henri de Lubac, *Theology in History* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1996), 136–163.

[18] This includes a people like Franz Delizsch, J. B. Heard, C. I. Scofield, Andrew Murray, and Jessie Penn-Lewis, many of whom were widely read by Watchman Nee. Berkhof, 192. Dana Roberts, *Secrets of Watchman Nee: His Life, His Teachings, His Influence* (Orlando, FL: Bridge–Logos, 2005), 92–93.

It is worth noting that Dana Roberts' 2005 book entitled *Secrets of Watchman Nee* is actually a revision of his earlier evaluation entitled *Understanding Watchman Nee: The Newest Book on Watchman Nee* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos–Haven Books, 1980). While his updated edition contains largely the same material as the first. After reading and interviewing people about accusations against Nee about adultery and money laundering, Roberts added several asides that highlight a more cynical view of his subject. Some of these are entitled: "A Question of Character," "Watchman Nee on Depression" and "Mozi or the Holy Spirit?"

Incidentally, this Dana Roberts (a man) should not be confused with Dana L. Robert (a woman), a professor of world Christianity at Boston University.

[19] Andrew Murray, *The Spirit of Christ* (New York, NY: Fleming H. Revell, 1888), 184.

church. During a 19th century climate when Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and other scientists were challenging the biblical notions of the creation of the material world, these Protestants withdrew their focus on the physical body and began to look beyond the corporeal and to highlight the transcendent nature of humanity.

When we come to Watchman Nee, he responds to the growing scientific disposition of the May Fourth Enlightenment with a countercultural alternative that, likewise, downplays the material and highlights distinctions in the metaphysical. While he differs from the philosophical background of the Greek Fathers, Nee was influenced by the spiritual writings of nineteenth-century trichotomists like Andrew Murray. For Nee, the body is the corporeal contact with the material world that gives humans a "world-consciousness."[20] The soul reveals one's unique personality and is the faculty of volition, intellect and emotion and, therefore, delivers a "self-consciousness." But it is the spirit that enables the mortal to commune and worship the Divine and is therefore humanity's "God-consciousness." God dwells in the spirit, the self dwells in the soul and the senses dwell in the body.

Watchman Nee believes trichotomy helps to explain the fundamental nature of humanity. At the time of creation, there existed a three-tier hierarchy in Adam whereby the spirit was at the top and controlled the soul which in turn controlled the body; Adam's whole being was essentially subjected under his spirit and, therefore, under God's Spirit. But this all changed at the Fall. In the Garden of Eden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil enticed the soul of Adam – that is, it promised to Adam a will that was independent of what God had already offered. Nee writes:

> According to its scientific definition, death is "the cessation of communication with environment." Death of the spirit is the cessation of its communication with God. Death of the body is the cutting off of communication between spirit and body.… Adam's spirit died because of his disobedience to God. He still had his spirit, yet it was dead to God for it had lost its spiritual instinct.… The death which began in our forefather's spirit gradually spread until it reached his body.[21]

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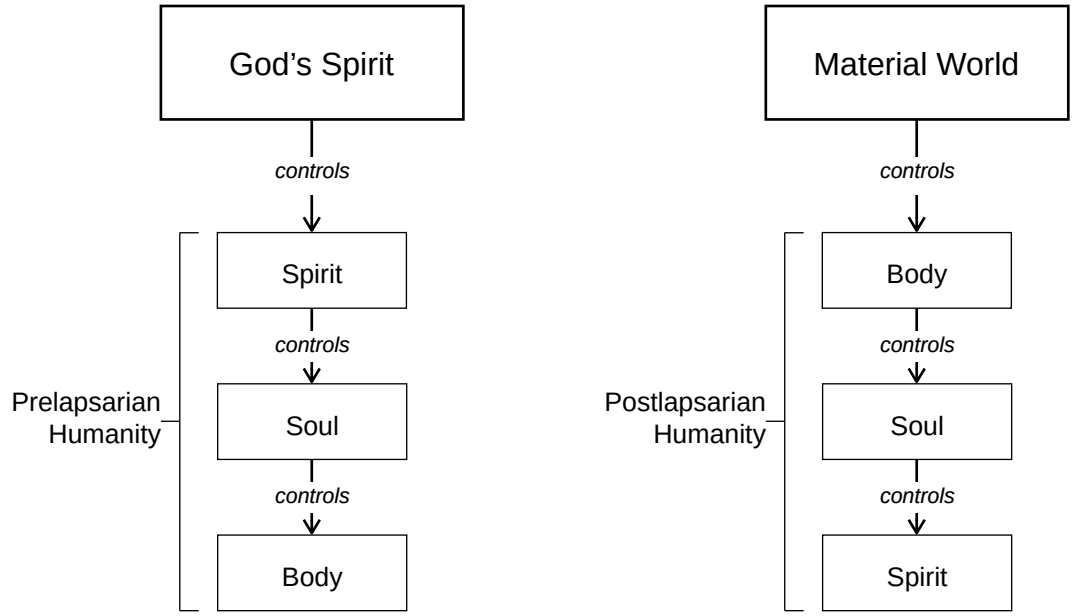
[20] Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, 1.26.

[21] Ibid, 1.50–51.

For Watchman Nee, the Fall eventually condemned all three aspects of human nature. The spirit, created as the noblest part, was now so oppressed that it is submitted under the control of the soul. It was the soul, after all, that was enticed to sin and the will of the self that was promoted above the will of God. As we shall see in chapter six, this is quite similar to the views of Maximus the Confessor (580–662) who argues that, after the Fall, humans have two competing wills working within themselves. However, for Nee this shift in the will of the self affects the relationship of each aspect of human nature. The soul has now usurped the authority of the spirit and, in turn, is enslaved to the lustful desires of the body.



This is why Hebrews 4:12 exhorts that the Word of God must pierce and divide the soul from the spirit. The spirit has lost all power and all sensation and is paralysed from serving and worshipping God. The soul is therefore not only independent of the control of the spirit and will of God, it is also governed by the lusts of the flesh or body. Nee, therefore, describes the unregenerate person as natural, selfish (that is, driven by the soul, the seat of the "self") and unable to receive gifts from the Spirit of God. He writes, "Such men as are under the control of their souls with their spirits suppressed are in direct contrast to spiritual people. They may be exceedingly intelligent, able to present masterful ideas or theories, yet they do

not consent to the things of the Spirit of God. They are unfit to receive revelation from the Holy Spirit."[22] Nee contrasts the natural or "soulish man" who is governed by the soul and its latent power with a "spiritual man" who is governed by the Holy Spirit and its gifts. However, it was by God's intention that a person's soul should be ruled by one's spirit. How are humans to return to this original design?

Watchman Nee believes God provides humanity with a two-part solution to their predicament. In classic law-oriented, type A theology, Nee states that after the Fall, death is the penalty for sin on all humanity. He writes, "It is man's triune nature which sins, therefore it is man who must die."[23] However, the God-man Jesus Christ came to the earth as a perfect, tripartite human. He then offered his life, as a ransom for the human race, on the cross. His perfect life became a perfect substitute and atonement for the sins of all humanity. As a result, everyone who believes in him has salvation and shall no longer be judged. Regeneration, then, is the process by which a person, now saved, receives new life. For Nee, this new birth comes from God's life giving life to the spirit of the person. God's Spirit engages the individual's spirit and never directly interacts with the soul or the body of the person.[24] The second part of the solution God provides has not been experienced by the majority of Christians. The average Christian is not living the "normal Christian life" – a true fullness of the salvation God offers.

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[22] Ibid, 1.53.
[23] Ibid, 1.55.
[24] Ibid, 1.61.

The Normal Christian Life

This idea of the "normal Christian life" originated from the theology espoused by earlier speakers from the yearly Keswick Conventions.[25] An exponent of this teaching, J. Robertson McQuilkin, writes:

> The normal Christian is characterized by loving responses to ingratitude and indifference, even hostility, and is filled with joy in the midst of unhappy circumstances and with peace when everything goes wrong. The normal Christian overcomes in the battle with temptation, consistently obeys the laws of God, and grows in self-control, contentment, humility, and courage. Thought processes are so under the control of the Holy Spirit and instructed by Scripture that the normal Christian authentically reflects the attitudes and behavior of Jesus Christ.[26]

For early-Keswick teachers, this is not an posthumous vision, but the reality of a life that enjoys the fullness of salvation offered by God and can be obtained in this life. While this terminology of a "normal Christian" is not found in the Bible, Keswick teachers argue that this was the teaching of the Apostle Paul: "And so, brothers and sisters, I [Paul] could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:1, NRSV).

The distinction here is between Christians who are "spiritual" and those who are "carnal" or "of the flesh." The latter behave like the unconverted whereas the former are filled with the Holy Spirit. McQuilkin explains these differences in what he calls "positional sanctification" and "experiential sanctification."[27] "Positional sanctification" deals with the penal standing that Christians have before God – forgiveness, justification and regeneration.

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[25] It is important to note that this idea of the "normal Christian life" was propagated primarily during the earlier years of the Keswick movement when the theology taught was more monolithic. In latter years, the movement began to have a larger variety of speakers who tended to come from a more Reformed background, including the evangelical John Stott. In this study, all references to Keswick theology is in reference to teachers influential during the earlier movement. David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 257–258. Andrew D. Naselli, "Keswick Theology: A Survey and Analysis of the Doctrine of Sanctification in the Early Keswick Movement," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 13 (2008): 17–18.

[26] J. Robert McQuilkin is the son of an early leader of the American Keswick variant known as the Victorious Life. J. Robert McQuilkin, "The Keswick Perspective," in *Five Views on Sanctification*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 151.

[27] There is also a concept that McQuilkin describes as "complete sanctification." For all intensive purposes, this is pretty much equivalent to what other Christians would consider "glorification" – an eschatological state of living with absolutely no influence of sin at all. Ibid, 158–160.

The latter concept, experiential sanctification, is a matter of perfect holiness that is available to all Christians through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Rather than a state of flawlessness, perfection here should be understood in terms of being mature and ceasing from committing deliberate sins (as opposed to unintentional sins). Keswick writers have consistently denied accusations by people like B. B. Warfield (1851–1921) and J. I. Packer (1926–) of embracing a version of John Wesley's "Christian perfectionism."[28] Through faith and a total surrender to God, the subnormal Christian can obtain a fullness of salvation. The normal Christian life is one that is characterised by a filling of the Holy Spirit, having a consistent victory over temptations and growing towards the likeness of Christ.

Watchman Nee was greatly influenced by this movement, especially through the teaching of Keswick writers like Andrew Murray, Jessie Penn-Lewis (1861–1927) and J. Hudson Taylor (1832–1905), the founder of the China Inland Mission.[29] Nee echoes the Keswick teachings of Christians being average or normal, carnal or spiritual and believes that the majority of Christians have not yet received the fullness of what God has offered.[30] Though these ideas can be found in his earlier works, his clearest formulation can be found in the appropriately titled *The Normal Christian Life*, a book based on addresses originally given while in Europe in 1938–1939 after attending the Keswick Convention for the first time and meeting T. Austin-Sparks. The text is mainly an exposition on the epistle to the Romans where Nee articulates what he calls the fourfold work of Christ on the cross.

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[28] According to J. Robert McQuilkin, his father, after meeting with Warfield about the recent publication of his book that attacked the Victorious Life movement, recalled that the Reformed theologian admitted, "If I had known these things, I would not have included the last chapter [on the Victorious Life] in my work," (Ibid, 156 en. 8 & 9). The accuracy of this anecdote, however, is questionable (Fred Zaspel, *The Theology of B. B. Warfield: A Systematic Summary* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 473n162).

B. B. Warfield, *Studies in Perfectionism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1958), 349–399. J. I. Packer, "'Keswick' and the Reformed Doctrine of Sanctification," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (July 1955): 153–167. J. I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God*, 2nd. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 120–133.

[29] Naselli, 24. Incidentally, the China Inland Mission would be the same organisation that met with Nee in the 1950s. Some of their congregations would later merge with the Little Flock movement.

[30] Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, 1.67–68.

The first two aspects of the work on the cross deal with the dual problem of "sins" and "sin," based on the first eight chapters of Romans. The beginning chapters of Romans give prominence to the plural form "sins," whereas the second half of these chapters focuses on the singular form "sin." Nee concludes, "It is because in the first section it is a question of the sins I have committed before God, which are many and can be enumerated, whereas in the second it is a question of sin as a principle working in me."[31] While a person may receive forgiveness for all sins committed, he or she still needs to be delivered from the power of sin. The solution for the first is afforded through the blood of Christ shed as an atoning work that justifies a person before God; the solution for the second, the sin-principle, is a sanctifying work that occurs through a union with Christ through his death and resurrection on the cross.[32] While the first is a prerequisite for the second; those who only know the first have subnormal Christian lives.[33] According to Nee, these two aspects of the blood and the cross of Christ are concerned with what Adam lost at the Fall, whereas the last two aspects of Christ's fourfold work deal with the realisation of a greater purpose of God than what Adam ever knew.

The third aspect of the cross deals with a dependence on God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Nee believed it was important to distinguish between the "outpouring" and the "indwelling" of the Holy Spirit. The first, he explains, is what was witnessed at Pentecost as recorded in the book of Acts. Nee is quick to say that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurs in different ways in different people – using examples of R. A. Torrey (1856–1928), D. L. Moody (1837–1899) and Charles Finney (1792–1875). However, the overall point of this outward activity was as a means to prove what had taken place in heaven – the exaltation of

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[31] Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life* (Fort Washington, PA: CLC Publishers, [1957] 2009), 10–11.

[32] Ibid, 29–30.

[33] Ibid, 29.

Christ to the right hand of God.[34] The second type of gift of the Holy Spirit, indwelling, is the actual Person of the Holy Spirit living inside of Christians, mere earthen vessels. Nee emphasises this point several times – Christians have a Person inside of them.[35] "The difference between victorious Christians and defeated ones is not that some have the Spirit while others have not, but that some know His indwelling and others do not…"[36] A victorious life is one that realises the power that comes with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

There are at least two major things that Nee is doing in his teaching of the gift of the Holy Spirit. First, he subtly responds to what he sees as the excesses in the growth of early Pentecostal teachings of his day that emphasised the baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by the speaking in tongues.[37] While much of what he has said thus far corresponds to the teachings of Andrew Murray, Nee is more hesitant than Murray in the nature of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.[38] The outpouring of the Holy Spirit is a great blessing. But the experience is different for different people and does not necessitate the speaking in tongues. The whole purpose of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is to proclaim the exaltation of God, not the exaltation of men and women – a risk he felt others had taken. The second major point Nee is bringing out through this understanding of the Holy Spirit is the power of the indwelling. Why does he emphasise the point that the Holy Spirit is a Person dwelling in Christians, who are mere vessels? A vessel is an inanimate object. Working from within a trichotomous framework, Nee teaches that it is no longer a human life or soul that reigns in the Christian; the Spirit of God is the Person animating the inanimate.[39] It is only then that the Christian is empowered to serve God.

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[34] Ibid, 112–113.

[35] Ibid, 124–128.

[36] Ibid, 128.

[37] Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 29.

[38] Murray, 15–20.

[39] Roberts, 135.

This leads to the fourth and final aspect of Nee's fourfold work of Christ: bearing the cross. Nee explains this as a daily dying of the "natural man" to enable a growing manifestation of the Holy Spirit.[40] Here, like in his other writings, Nee begins to explain the inherent power that exists in the human soul. Before the Fall, God gave Adam a supernatural power to think, manage the garden and, ultimately, to become like God. However, after the Fall, Adam's soul was no longer subject to the spirit's control but has fallen under the dominion of the flesh's control. But the soul did not lose this preexisting ability, what he calls a "latent power." How does this affect humanity's relationship with God? Nee responds:

> The Holy Spirit works in our spirit; but the evil spirit operates in our soul. Satan can only operate in the soul and by the power of the soul. Satan has no way to commence his work in man's spirit; his working is restricted to the soul.… We may say that while the Holy Spirit is the power of God, man's soul appears to be the power of Satan.[41]

He believes that humanity still has a supernatural power in its soul. If it is not properly bridled, it is the one thing that can be used by Satan. This supernatural power continues to exist within Christians and non-Christians alike. But when a person becomes a Christian, he or she now has two competing powers working within: the power of God working through the spirit and the power of Satan working through the soul.

In his works, Nee brings up interesting examples to explain the latent power of the soul. The first set of examples includes various supernatural abilities. In one of the few places where he speaks about Chinese religions, Nee argues that "ascetic practices, breathings, and abstract meditations of Buddhism and Taoism… are only the manifestations of the latent power of man's soul."[42] He does not limit this to Chinese teachings, but he claims that all supernatural activities like hypnotism, fortune-telling and prayers of Hinduism and other religions get their power from the soul. Another group of examples deal with a person's natural abilities. Prior to becoming a Christian, many individuals have had a strong

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[40] Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*, 199–200.

[41] Watchman Nee, *The Latent Power of the Soul* (New York, NY: Christian Fellowship Publishers, [1933] 1972), 33.

[42] Ibid, 33–34.

aptitude to study and may be skilled in history, literature or science. Then, the person becomes a Christian and wants to study the Bible in a fashion much like he or she did in past studies. While the interest in the Bible is something to be rejoiced in, the reality is that the person is studying based on his or her own natural abilities.[43] On the one hand, Nee, like the May Fourth reformers, attacks the "superstitious" approaches of other religions. On the other hand, he disagrees with attempts to employ a person's natural skills to God's ministry. This would include a number of Christian academics like T. C. Chao and L. C. Wu who used their academic prowess to leverage Confucianism in their approaches to Christianity. Watchman Nee disagreed with any attempt to make use of the latent power of the soul, both natural and supernatural abilities, for the work of God. The Christian is to rely on the power of the spirit rather than the power of the soul.

One commentator, Dana Roberts, makes the helpful observation that Watchman Nee goes to great lengths to discuss the complexities of the spirit and the soul but does not spend much time on the body. Roberts believes this is due to the fact that Nee is not a doctor or scientist and can only comment on his work in the metaphysical (the spirit and the soul).[44] While this is true of Nee's expertise, it seems as though the reason he spends less time on the body is because he does not see it as important as the soul and the spirit. For Nee, this is the precise reason why he believes the dichotomous position is inaccurate – dichotomy diminishes any differences between the soul and the spirit.[45] If there is no distinction, then there is nothing to divide and no difference between the power of the soul and the power of the spirit. In fact, the differences between the spirit and the soul are so important that Nee believes they affect the physical body. He explains that the power of the Holy Spirit's presence in a person is protection from sickness.[46] He goes on to say that sickness is caused

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[43] Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*, 205–210.

[44] Roberts, 127.

[45] Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, 1.21.

[46] Ibid, 3.142–143, 158–164.

by sin, which is fundamentally based on one's dependence on the self. "To say we love ourselves means we cherish our bodies and our life. Hence to destroy this [love of self] God often permits sickness to come upon us. Because of our love of self we are fearful lest our body be weakened; yet God weakens it; He allows us to experience pain."[47] Ironically, when he first began to write these views in *The Spiritual Man*, Nee was sick with tuberculosis and thought he would soon die. Despite this fact, Watchman Nee's solution to medical problems in the body was to give up the love of the soul and to trust in the Holy Spirit, through one's own spirit.

So if the Christian should not rely on his or her soul power, how does the spiritual power manifest? Nee's answer is simple: bear the cross daily. He believes that the Christian must continually crucify the natural life in the soul. This does not mean that a person is to do away with one's natural abilities, personality and individuality. Rather, "The soul is still there with its natural endowments, but the cross is brought to bear upon it to bring those natural endowments into death… and thereafter, as God may please, to give them back to us in glorious resurrection."[48] In order for the indwelt Spirit to truly reign, the outer shelter must bear the cross and die before it can come back to life. This is a constant work that must be done. Only then can a person live a normal Christian life, the life of a "spiritual man."

It is worth noting that the early-Keswick soteriology that Watchman Nee adapts has been vehemently attacked by other "law-oriented" theologians, particularly from the Augustinian–Calvinist lineage like B. B. Warfield and J. I. Packer. In his 1955 article on the subject, Packer was clear to emphasise his disagreement with the teaching: "*Keswick teaching is Pelagian through and through.* There is no hint… that God's sovereignty extends to the will, or that His sanctifying activity in any way affects the will. On the contrary, we are told again and again [by Keswick writers] that God's ability to sanctify Christians is entirely

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[47] Ibid, 3.166.

[48] Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*, 225.

dependent on their own prior willingness to be sanctified."[49] Reformed theologians like Packer are precise in identifying regeneration as based on divine monergism while sanctification, in contrast, is synergistic.[50] While this may be an overstatement of the position, Packer believes early-Keswick teachers held that humans had the natural ability to sanctify themselves apart from God. Hence, as opposed to an Augustinian divine monergism (and divine–human synergism) that depends on divine grace, early-Keswick soteriology held to a Pelagian humanistic monergism that depends on human will.

However, this is not the case with Watchman Nee. For Nee, salvation is the uniting of a person with God, taking two steps: first is the union of our lives with His life and second is the union of our wills with His will. The former occurs immediately upon regeneration – when a person becomes a Christian, the life of God is united with the life of the individual. In regards to the latter, Nee writes,

> Our will being what it is, God of course daily seeks its union with His will. Salvation cannot be complete until man's will is united entirely with God's. Without that perfect bond *man's self* is yet at odds with Him. He wants us to have His life, but He also wants us to be united with Him. Since our will most closely represents us, our union with God cannot be complete without the joining of our will to Him.
>
> A careful reading of the Scriptures will yield the fact that a common denominator underlies all our sins: the principle of disobedience. Through Adam's disobedience we perish; through the obedience of Christ we are saved. Formerly we were sons of disobedience; today God wants us to be sons of obedience. Disobedience means to follow one's own will; obedience means to follow God's will. The purpose of divine salvation is to encourage us to deny our will and be united with Him.… Unless the believer is determined in his volition to finish the course God has set before him, nothing is of any worth.[51]

What Watchman Nee here proposes is not Pelagian (humanistic monergism) but, much like in Eastern Orthodoxy, synergism – a co-operation between human and divine wills. God daily initiates, by his grace, to change in humans and it is for humans, with their God-ordained free will, to respond to God's initiation. Salvation is not meritorious since it cannot occur without God first initiating and extending his grace. Moreover, like the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of

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[49] Packer, "'Keswick' and the Reformed Doctrine of Sanctification," 158.

[50] Ibid, 154-155. Cf. Naselli, 54.

[51] Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, 3.83–84.

theosis, Nee believes salvation is complete when the will of a person is united with the will of God.

Now, if Watchman Nee differs from the Pelagian tendencies of early-Keswick writers and, likewise, is seemingly not aware of Eastern Orthodox writings, where does he base his synergistic soteriology? Despite his silence in regards to the Chinese cultural context, Watchman Nee upholds a theological view that, like his type B, truth-oriented contemporaries, found some truth in within Chinese religiosity. As seen in the saying "Heaven and humanity in unity" (*Tian Ren Heyi*), Julia Ching (Qin Jiayi, 1934–2001) asserts that most Chinese religions and philosophies seek a harmony between Heaven and humanity.[52] Whether it be the Chinese Buddhist enlightenment (*puti*), becoming a Confucian *junzi* ("profound person" or "exemplary person"), or attaining a mystical union with the *Tiandao* (Heavenly way), most Chinese religions and philosophies seek their respective ultimate goals with a synergy between the divine and human orders. As we shall see in greater detail in chapter five, the traditional Chinese mindset has a very difficult time with a view of divine monergism. Rather, Chinese philosophies and religions understand the metaphysics of causality very synergistically where "Heaven engenders and humanity completes" (*Tiansheng, rencheng*). Like another "Chinese religion," Watchman Nee's contextualisation of Christianity seeks the goal of a harmony between God and humanity.

THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH LIFE

The only two books Watchman Nee set out to write were *The Spiritual Man* and *Concerning Our Missions*. Dozens of other texts have been attributed to him and translated into English and other languages. But these are mainly compilations of articles or notes from his sermons and other addresses. In *The Spiritual Man*, as we have seen, Nee attempts to

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[52] Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (London: MacMillan Press, 1993), 6.

present his most complete understanding of the nature of humanity and the goals of the gospel. In *Concerning Our Missions*, published in English in 1939 only after much encouragement by several British friends, Nee described what he believed was the New Testament model for the local congregation. When the text was republished in 1962, it was given a new name: *The Normal Christian Church Life*. Much like his published addresses in *The Normal Christian Life*, his ecclesiological text asserted that the average congregation misunderstands the biblical model of the local community of Christians. While many Christians around the world applauded Watchman Nee's work on *The Spiritual Man* as a great Christian text, his second work, *Concerning Our Missions*, would be much more controversial.

Much of this ecclesiology would be developed based on Plymouth Brethren values that Nee received through the writings of J. N. Darby (1800–1882), William Kelly (1821–1906), George Müller (1805–1898) and the teachings of his early mentor, Margaret E. Barber.[53] Organised in the early-19th century, the Plymouth Brethren was a response to a growing disenchantment with both the established Church of England and the numerous nonconformist groups (e.g., Methodism and the Oxford Movement). Brethren groups rejected the priestly hierarchy of the first, preferring the "priesthood of all believers" (1 Peter 2:9), and believed the second group was simply too fragmented based on extra-biblical teachings. Rather than focus on a complex system of church polity that hindered the work of God, Christians were to live lives of holiness with an eager anticipation of Christ's Second Coming. This emphasis on holy living drew a close affinity with Keswick teachings; while the two movements are not to be confused as identical, teachings of the Keswick and Brethren movements tended to influence one another.[54] In general, Plymouth Brethrens are generally

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[53] Lee, 73.

[54] Keswick teaching focus on a subsequent stage of sanctification whereas Brethrens tended to focus on an instance and entire sanctification. Bebbington, 157–158.

divided into two subgroups: “exclusive” and “open.” The first group tended to emphasise the responsibilities of the local assembly and tended to separate from other groups; the Open Brethren, in contrast, allow each assembly to be independent from others in doctrinal matters.

Much like the beginnings of the Plymouth Brethren, Watchman Nee was disenchanted by the institutional church in China – mainly formed by foreign missions. Denominations and mission agencies created divisions between congregations and the hierarchical structures of these entities inevitably placed many foreign missionaries above their local Chinese counterparts. He would also take issue with baptism by sprinkling and the infrequent, quarterly practice of the Holy Communion, both, he believed, have no precedents in the New Testament.[55] Like British Christians of J. N. Darby’s day, Nee believed Chinese Christians of his day were trapped in artificial theological systems that did not see the urgency of holiness or the parousia. Nee would first come into contact with an Exclusive Brethren from the “London Group” in 1930 who would later invite him to England the United States to meet other like-minded assemblies.[56]

While much of the Exclusive Brethren ecclesiology and eschatology resonated with Nee, he continued to read widely from Open Brethrens (e.g., George Müller) and non-Brethrens. His interactions with Christians of other backgrounds would eventually result in a break in his relationship with the Exclusive Brethren. This would occur as a result of Nee’s interactions with T. Austin-Sparks’ Honour Oak Christian Fellowship Centre in London and C. H. Judd of the China Inland Mission. As Angus Kinnear writes in his biography of Watchman Nee, “In principle the meetings of the ‘London Group’ were fenced off from all other meetings of Christian believers. Substantially anyone outside was debarred from fellowship with anyone inside it unless he agreed from that time forth to restrict his

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[55] Many churches shared the Holy Communion once a quarter whereas Nee believed the Bible taught it should be practiced every time the congregation met. Cliff, 81–82.

[56] Kinnear, 138.

movements to meeting within the fence."[57] Despite this fallout, the values of both Brethren groups would continue to have an impact on Nee's view of the local church.

The Antioch Model

As has been mentioned, Watchman Nee had a strong belief that there should be only one local assembly in any given locality. In the Bible, Christian congregations would only be known by their geographic locations (e.g., Corinthians, Galatians and Philippians). Therefore, the present day church does not have any warrant for divisions other than locale. Much like the Open Brethren, Nee taught that each assembly should be autonomous of other groups and not under any overarching umbrella organisation:

> Whenever a special leader, or a specific doctrine, or some experience, or creed, or organization, becomes a center for drawing together the believers of different places, then because the center of such a church federation is other than Christ, it follows that its sphere will be other than local. And whenever the divinely-appointed sphere of locality is displaced by a sphere of human invention, there the divine approval cannot rest. The believers within such a sphere may truly love the Lord, but they have another center apart from Him, and it is only natural that the second center becomes the controlling one.… If each church is locally governed, and all authority is in the hands of the local elders, there is no scope for an able and ambitious false prophet to display his organizing genius by forming the different companies of believers into one vast federation, and then satisfy his ambition by constituting himself as its head.[58]

Nee believed that if groups of local congregations were organised under a federal head, there was a great risk of developing another denomination or, worst, a heretical sect. The focus of such a group would not be on Christ and, therefore, be unacceptable. This meant that each assembly was isolated from one another and could not interfere with each other's ministries.

In regards to the polity of each local body, Watchman Nee devised what he called the "Antioch" model.[59] In Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by the Holy Spirit from the church in Antioch to go and minister in other areas. Following this model, Nee

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[57] Ibid, 150.

[58] Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Church Life*, 2nd ed. (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, [1939] 1994), 69–70.

[59] Ibid, 19–37.

described that God raises up missionaries known as “apostles” who are sent out from one location to bring the gospel and establish churches in another location. Since these apostles were not originally from this new locale, they had no right to rule but could appoint “elders” to oversee the new ministry. The only prerequisites for this office was that the Christian was both mature and a member of that local assembly. Like the first century church, Nee taught that apostles and elders would be commissioned by the Holy Spirit when the time comes.

For Watchman Nee, it was also absolutely important that the church should not be involved in any “carnal activities.” This meant that no church leader would receive a salary and the church should not be involved in any business activities – even running a school or a hospital.[60] Along with the autonomy of local churches, we see a very odd ordinance in the running of the church. Due to the anti-religious sentiments of the May Fourth enlightenment, one of the major reforms underway was to separate the education system from all religious groups and political parties.[61] While this charge was mainly against schools established by missionary organisations, Nee would likewise respond to this context and argue that any business activity connected to the church would be considered carnal. When Nee published these views in *Concerning Our Missions*, it became publicly documented that he believed the Little Flock was the only Christian movement in the world to uphold the New Testament teachings on church government and ordinances, eventually causing great division among the churches.[62] Much like his views on two types of Christians, Watchman Nee here sets out the rules to distinguish between a congregation that is carnal or spiritual, average or normal.

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[60] Ibid, 103.

[61] Yamamoto, 121–126.

[62] Cliff, 135–136.

The Jerusalem Model

In 1942, during the Second Sino-Japanese War, Watchman Nee would be faced with a new difficulty in his ministry. In December 1941, hostilities broke between the Japanese and the United States with the bombing of Pearl Harbour. This situation had a significant impact on China's foreign trade and caused a severe inflation. Many Little Flock leaders and members struggled during this economic downturn. Watchman Nee believed he found a solution when he decided to help his brother George in his struggling pharmaceutical enterprise. He argued that it was something the Apostle Paul did when he made tents to support his ministry.[63] To many Little Flock members, this seemed to be a violation of Nee's very own teachings in *Concerning Our Missions* and, in late 1942, he would be barred from teaching by the elders of the Shanghai assembly. Though discouraged by this, Watchman Nee would remain working with the company until 1948 when he would be reinstated to teach by the Shanghai assembly.

During Watchman Nee's hiatus from the Shanghai assembly (1942–1948), he requested his coworker Witness Lee (Li Changshou, 1905–1997) to move south from Shandong to help with the conflicts in Shanghai. "But Lee was an activist," describes Angus Kinnear, a biographer of Nee's, "and where Watchman as a profound Bible student had laid doctrinal foundations, Lee's more volatile temperament introduced something of the Shandong excitement and fire. This brought quick returns… Lee was authoritarian and energetic, thriving on large numbers and with a flair for organising people.[64] Earlier in Shandong, Witness Lee began to experiment with a strategy of evangelism by migration. Its basic approach was to uproot groups of Christian families and move them to another location to reestablish themselves and work as a unit to evangelise and develop a new local assembly. Yet, in Kinnear's eyes, Lee's temperament and managerial disposition would have a negative

[63] Kinnear, 212–214.

[64] Ibid, 221.

impact on Nee's ministry. Lee shared these ideas with Nee and, after returning to the Shanghai assembly in 1948, Nee formalised it in the "Jerusalem" model.[65] Nee now taught that when he previously articulated the "Antioch" model, there was a lack of clarity to the role of Jerusalem. In 1948, it was clarified by Lee to Nee that though churches should exist in different locales, the work is basically regional. Peter, James, John and others worked in the region around Jerusalem, whereas Paul, Silas, Timothy and Barnabas worked in a different region. While local assemblies should not exercise authority on other local assemblies, each region has a centre – Jerusalem and Antioch being two prime examples. Additionally, Peter was both an apostle and an elder. Peter was an elder in Jerusalem and an apostle in the region.

The Jerusalem model was also to be applied to the Little Flock movement. Local churches would get standardised training from their regional centres in Fuzhou and Shanghai and evangelise through migration. Dana Roberts concludes, "The dynamics of this polity work on the principle that there are spiritual men capable of teaching others to do the 'work.' As practices in the postwar local church in China, there are actually only two 'spiritual men' who are doing the teaching: Watchman Nee and Witness Lee."[66] If we were to give him the benefit of the doubt, this approach seems to provide a more stabilised leadership in post-war China, encourage a spirit of mentorship as can be found between Paul and Timothy and empowers believers to evangelise. However, through this new revelation, the autonomy of each local assembly was now undermined and subjected under a new episcopalian system. What happened to Nee's earlier stance of not forming federations of churches? It seems that, like his contemporaries – both secular and type B Christians –Nee merely wanted to be independent from foreign control. The ultimate irony of all this is that though he began his ministry attacking foreign denominationalism and its unnecessary hierarchies, Watchman Nee

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[65] Watchman Nee, *Further Talks on the Church Life*, 2nd ed. (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, [1948] 1997), 143–158. See Liang Jialin (Leung Ka-lun), *Ni Tuosheng de Rongru Shengchu* [Watchman Nee: His Glory and Dishonor] (Hong Kong: China Alliance Press, 2003), 97–184.

[66] Roberts, 157.

eventually developed his very own Chinese denomination with himself as its self-appointed head.

On Final Things

In addition to the ecclesiology of the Brethren, earlier on Watchman Nee was also impressed by the dispensational, premillennialist eschatology of J. N. Darby and C. I. Scofield (1843–1921).[67] In its classical formulation, dispensationalism asserts that there are seven different periods of time, or "dispensations," whereby God engages with His people and works to bring about two goals or purposes: an earthly purpose and a heavenly one. On earth, God will bring redemption to all that was corrupted and lost at the Fall and grant immortality to the human race – in particular, those who have not died but were preserved from death by God. However, those who were redeemed in the previous dispensations and died would be resurrected in a heavenly humanity to fulfil God's heavenly purpose. The promised Davidic kingdom, the "kingdom of heaven," was offered to the nation of Israel; since Israel rejected the kingdom of heaven, it was now offered to Christians in the present dispensation. In contrast, the "kingdom of God" is the moral rule of God in the hearts of His followers. At the end of the present dispensation, Jesus will return in secret to "rapture" or take up Christians – both living and dead. This would be followed by a seven year rule of the Anti-Christ known as the Great Tribulation, until Christ appears to overthrow him. Christ will reign for the Millennium in Jerusalem to fulfil the earthly purpose with the nation of Israel. This will be followed by the resurrection and judgment of the wicked and the final state where the kingdom of heaven will merge with the kingdom of God.

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[67] While there are generally identified three major forms of dispensationalism, Nee was most influenced by what is known as "classical dispensationalism." The other two, "revised dispensationalism" and "progressive dispensationalism" were developed in the 1950s–1990s and the 1990s–present, respectively. To be clear, all three types of dispensationalists hold to premillennialism (the view that Christ will come to reign before the prophesied Millennium), but not all premillennialists are dispensationalists. For more information, see Darrel L. Bock and Craig A. Blaising, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 9–56.

For Watchman Nee, this dispensational premillenialism was not only important but a necessary view of the eschaton.[68] Like with the Plymouth Brethren, this teaching empowered Nee to challenge his listeners with an urgency for personal holiness and evangelism. We have already seen the dichotomy of the spiritual Christian and the carnal Christian and the spiritual church and the carnal church – now he has justification for the spiritual kingdom and the carnal kingdom. Like other dispensationalists of his day, he believes there is a distinction between the earthly Jewish people and the spiritual Church who corresponded with the two goals of heaven and earth. Whereas J. N. Darby and C. I. Scofield taught all Christians would be raptured before the Great Tribulation, Nee asserted that only a partial rapture would occur with the overcomers.[69] Only the overcomers – the faithful, spiritual Christians – will be allowed into the kingdom of heaven. The majority of Christians who are carnal and average will remain to suffer and be persecuted in a period of refinement during the Great Tribulation.[70] While this spiritual distinction will continue through the Millenium, at the eschaton, there will no longer be any distinction between Christians. In contrast to the humanistic disposition of his May Fourth contemporaries, Nee inspired his listeners to have an otherworldly outlook pursued personal holiness and lived in expectation of Christ's Second Coming.

CONCLUSION

The May Fourth enlightenment brought forth several other type A, "law-oriented" Chinese theologies from Christian leaders like Wang Mingdao and John Sung (Song Shangjie, 1901–1944). Many of them were self-proclaimed fundamentalists who tended to hold an

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[68] Cliff, 254–258.

[69] Dana Roberts speculates that the source of Nee's partial rapture theory comes from his mentor Margaret E. Barber. As was mentioned earlier, Barber was baptised by David M. Panton of Surrey Chapel in Norwich. This very same church was founded by Robert Govett (1813–1901) who was one of the first to devise the partial rapture theory. Roberts, 162–163.

[70] Dana Roberts describes this as a Protestant version of purgatory. Ibid, 161.

antithetical perspective with their surrounding environments. For them, contextual theology could primarily be described in terms of a gospel that subverts the broader culture and society (the countercultural model). They were dynamic preachers, prolific writers and well known Christian leaders in China. In contrast with other law-oriented Chinese Christians, Nee's popularity has grown beyond China through the translation of the many works that bear his name.

In the 1950s, Watchman Nee began preaching about one's civic duties from Mark 12:17 and Romans 13:1-7. The Chinese Christian needs to be willing to simplify his or her life of material wealth in favour of the government's efforts to rebuild the war-torn and poverty-stricken country.[71] In a controversial move, he encouraged many Little Flock leaders to participate in the TSPM and, from August 1950 to April 1951, gathered nearly 35,000 signatures in support of the "Christian Manifesto" – a document produced in cooperation with Premier Zhou Enlai (1898–1976) to sever Chinese Christianity's ties with foreign powers.[72] This made up 17 percent of the 200,000 signatures collected among Chinese Protestants at the time. Oddly, most of these Little Flock signatures were originally collected for an earlier petition that lobbied the government to refrain from nationalising the Little Flock's lands in Guiling. Nevertheless, this seems to have been a departure from his earlier countercultural stand and an active response to the social and political context of China. Was this a sign that Nee began to embrace a type B, "truth-oriented" theology like the modernist theologies of his contemporaries? Unfortunately, we can only speculate about his theological views during this period; just a year later, Watchman Nee would be imprisoned and silenced by the communist government on charges of corrupt business practices.

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[71] Cliff, 50–52.

[72] Liang Jialin, 1–96.

Watchman Nee's uneasy alliance allowed the "Little Flock" to operate with relative independence.[73] In contrast, John Sung died before 1949 and Wang Mingdao publicly opposed the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and lambasted its members as non-Christians. Today, in the Second Chinese Enlightenment, many former "Little Flock" congregations have joined the reinstated TSPM while others remain part of the unregistered "house church" (*jiating jiaohui*) movement. Through the work of Witness Lee, Nee's ministry has grown in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Malaysia, United States and many other regions. With the help and encouragement of T. Austin-Sparks and his son-in-law Angus I. Kinnear, many of Nee's teachings were published in English as early as 1939.[74] In contrast, the writings of Wang Mingdao and John Sung have not been readily available in English until much later in the 1980s–1990s. Watchman Nee's thoughts have since been influential in several groups in North America and Europe like the charismatic movement and the Jesus People. For many Westerners, Nee has become the face of Chinese Christianity. Because of the popularity of his teachings inside and outside of China, the vibrancy of his movement in both Chinese enlightenments and his unique relationship with the TSPM, Watchman Nee is a particularly interesting individual for this study as a representative of a law-oriented, countercultural, contextual theology for China.

However, what do we make of the various type B, truth-oriented tendencies in his thinking that included aspects of China's socio-political and religio-philosophical context? As we shall see in other Chinese contextual theologies, these ideological frameworks had operated implicitly, rather than explicitly, within Watchman Nee's thinking. Christian theology is often influenced by underlying philosophical orientations. Hence, type A thinkers

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[73] Lee, 83–85.

[74] With the encouragement and help of T. Austin-Sparks and the publishing company he ran (Witness and Testimony), Watchman Nee published an English translation of his *Concerning Our Missions*. T. Austin-Sparks would also use his London magazine *A Witness and a Testimony* to publish a series of Nee's articles entitled "The Normal Christian Life" (November 1940–March 1942) which would later be recompiled as a book under the same name with the help of his son-in-law Angus I. Kinnear in Bombay (1957).

like Tertullian and Augustine were both influenced by the popular philosophies of their day – namely, Stoic and Neoplatonic thought. However, type B theologians like Origen and Thomas Aquinas made explicit use of their philosophical backgrounds, Platonic and Aristotelian though, respectively, as handmaidens to their theologies. As we shall see shortly, this is also true among Chinese type B theologians who took Confucianism or communism as fundamental bases for their theology. For Nee, his use of Chinese religious and philosophical ideas like synergy and divine-human union, and anti-foreign tendencies of May Fourth reformers is never explicit in his thought.

It is worth recalling that at the outset of this chapter, the question was presented as to whether or not Watchman Nee can appropriately be described as a contextual theologian. It is clear that he was interested in indigenisation with his emphasis on developing an independent, Chinese church movement. But the critical question for contextualisation is whether Watchman Nee sought to address the social and political milieux of his contemporary, Chinese society. The reality is that contextualisation does not require the theologian to directly engage a given context – the sheer fact that the person lives and thinks in a particular context necessitates a response to it. Stephen B. Bevans rightly argues, "There is no such thing as 'theology'; there is only *contextual* theology… Doing theology contextually is not an option, nor is it something that should only interest people from the Third World… As we have come to understand theology today, it is a process that is part of the very nature of theology itself."[75] While some approaches to theology may be consciously addressing their respective contexts, others are implicitly contextual in their approach. Early-Keswick speakers, were implicitly contextual theologians who addressed a society that lost interest in personal holiness due to the growth in the scientific revolution and modernism in Europe. Likewise, against the backdrop of the failing denominationalism in England, Brethren writers

[75] Bevans, 3.

argued for the urgency of personal holiness, the priesthood of all believers and a message of Christ's second coming that needed to be proclaimed to the world.

Watchman Nee was no different in his context. He too was a contextual theologian addressing the Chinese with an urgent message. Like his secular contemporaries, Nee attacked denominationalism, the work of foreign missions and the presence of Christian schools, hospitals and other businesses. While he believed there was a biblical warrant for these attacks, Nee indirectly addressed the concerns of his contemporaries who largely believed foreigners and Christian institutionalism had overextended their stay in China. In many ways his gospel also subverted the scientific rationalism of his day. May Fourth reformers sought a de-spiritualised, thisworldly emphasis. However, like the Second Chinese Enlightenment quest for a desecularised reality, Watchman Nee has preached a hyper-spiritualised, otherworldly hope. In a context torn by the Japanese occupation, a civil war and numerous other calamities, Nee promised a victorious life and an eager anticipation of the eschaton. During the Second Chinese Enlightenment, Christian communities affected by the ills of the Cultural Revolution, the 1989 Tiananmen Square military clampdown and the "socialist market economy" (*shehuizhuyi shichang jingji*) still maintain the otherworldly values Nee once professed. For example, Alan Hunter and Kim-Kwong Chan give a case study of Christian communities in Xiamen that were once influenced by Watchman Nee.[76] These communities today continue to have this same otherworldly disposition emphasising holiness and an eschatological hope pointing to events like the 1991 war in Iraq as signs that the eschaton was near. Watchman Nee's message rings clear in both Chinese enlightenments: the focus of all Christians should not be on this dying world and its needs but on living a victorious life offered by Christ in this life and the life to come.

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[76] Alan Hunter and Kim-Kwong Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 191–199.

Watchman Nee has made an important contribution to the portfolio of China's contextual theologies. While he is quite rooted in the law-oriented lineage of type A theologies, there are aspects of his teachings that could be placed in other types. The strength of his legacy can be attested to by the tremendous numbers of his direct and indirect followers. However, the Second Chinese Enlightenment brings a revival of religious traditions which poses an interesting challenge to the resilience of Watchman Nee's theology for China's new context. Are other religious realities mere *adiaphora* and useless remnants of the latent power of the soul? While law-oriented theologies like that of Watchman Nee have been useful for a particular context, theologians must be mindful of other approaches for the construction of a contextual theology for the future of China.

3. T. C. CHAO'S SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

As we move on to explore the second type of Chinese theology, with an emphasis on truth, there is perhaps no better representative than T. C. Chao (Zhao Zichen, 1888–1979). Since 1926, Chao was a professor of theology and religious philosophy at the prestigious Yenching University in Beijing and, in 1948, was elected one of the six presidents of the World Council of Churches. As a Christian academic thinking and writing in the midst of May Fourth Enlightenment, Chao had many of the same concerns as his contemporaries, including that of the law-oriented Chinese theologies of Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng, 1903–1972) and Wang Mingdao (1900–1991). On the one hand, he needed to address the foreign nature of the gospel as seen through missionaries and denominationalism. On the other hand, Chao needed to respond to the intellectual milieu of his day that preferred "Mr. Science" and "Mr. Democracy" over superstitious ideologies like religious belief.

While law-oriented methods of Watchman Nee and Wang Mingdao preferred an antithetical approach to the prevalent culture, T. C. Chao and other type B thinkers tended to embrace their Chinese context, both in terms of socio-political concerns and religio-spiritual legacy. The missiologist Stephen B. Bevans describes this as the anthropological model of contextual theology:

> [T]he primary concern of the anthropological model is the establishment or preservation of cultural identity by a person of Christian faith.… This does not mean that the gospel cannot challenge a particular context, but such a challenge is always viewed with suspicion that the challenge is not coming from God as such, but from a tendency of one (western, Mediterranean) contextual perspective to impose its values on another.[1]

[1] Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 54.

This anthropological approach is characteristic of several other Chinese truth-oriented Christian thinkers. This is the case of L. C. Wu (Wu Leichuan, 1870–1944), Chao's senior by almost two decades, who was thoroughly trained in the Confucian classics and successfully passed the imperial civil service examinations. Despite becoming a Christian at age forty-five, Wu's intellectual upbringing would play a significant role in shaping his understanding of his newfound faith.[2] L. C. Wu described the Christian God as impersonal and naturalistic, much like the Confucian concept of *Tian* (Heaven), and believed both ancient traditions pursued largely the same ethical ideals. In contrast, a younger contemporary of T. C. Chao, Y. T. Wu (Wu Yaozong, 1893–1979), turned to Chinese communism as a resource to synthesise with Christianity.[3] For Y. T. Wu, the Kingdom of God was a spiritual goal that could only be achieved after the establishment of an ideal society – one with economic equality and social justice. Marxism emphasised both and, for Y. T. Wu, was seen as strategic in realising the Kingdom of God. Situated in a time between both L. C. Wu and Y. T. Wu, T. C. Chao saw value in both the religious and philosophical past of China and the social reconstruction apparent in the country's future.

Like these other type B Chinese Christians, T. C. Chao found significant resources in the intellectual underpinnings of society for evaluating and understanding Christianity in China. Along similar lines to L. C. Wu, Chao saw Confucianism as invaluable in the work of contextualising the gospel for the country.[4] Of course, he was conscious that many May Fourth revolutionaries attacked China's spiritual traditions as part of feudalism's past. But it

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[2] L. C. Wu began to outline much of this in a monograph entitled *Christianity and Chinese Culture.* Wu Leichuan, *Jidujiao yu Zhongguo Wenhua* [Christianity and Chinese Culture] (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 2008 [1936]). Lee-ming Ng, "Wu Lei-chuen: From Indigenization to Revolution," *Ching Feng* 20, no. 4 (1977):190–209.

[3] Lee-ming Ng, "A Study of Y. T. Wu," *Ching Feng* 15, no. 1 (1972):31–51.

[4] While having similar approaches, a disagreement arose between L. C. Wu and T. C. Chao about the relationship between Christianity and Confucianism. For greater discussion of this debate, see Sze-kar Wan, "The Emerging Hermeneutics of the Chinese Church: Debate between Wu Leichuan and T. C. Chao and the Chinese Christian Problematik," in *The Bible in Modern China: The Literary and Intellectual Impact*, ed. Irene Eber, Sze-kar Wan, Knut Walf (Sankt Augustin, Germany: Institut Monumenta Serica, 1999), 351–382.

is important to remember that, despite this iconoclasm, there were other intellectuals who preferred to reform China's ancient teachings. During the May Fourth Enlightenment, individuals like Liang Shuming (1893—1988) and Xiong Shili (1885–1968) engaged with the Western philosophies of people like Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) and Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) to modernise Confucianism.[5] Likewise, the monk Taixu (1890–1947) restructured Buddhism by forming national and international institutions like its Christian counterpart and reinterpreted Buddhist teachings in terms of science and humanistic concerns everyday life.[6] So, while engaging with Confucianism could have proven to be a disastrous endeavour, T. C. Chao identified its millennia-old teachings as part of China's spiritual core. Likewise, Chao was also very much supportive of the May Fourth cry for national salvation (*jiuguo*) and believed that Christianity must be the basis of the social reconstruction of China. Unlike the type A theology of Watchman Nee from the previous chapter, T. C. Chao believed that Christianity could only be relevant to his contemporary Chinese if it dialogued with Confucianism while still attempting to be intelligible to the scientific mind of the May Fourth Enlightenment.

However, in the early-1940s, T. C. Chao and other academics would be imprisoned by Japanese forces during the Sino-Japanese War. This event would prove to be life-changing for Chao in many respects. His theological reflections after his release would be fundamentally quite different from his earlier concerns. While T. C. Chao's earlier writings quite clearly followed a type B theology akin with other "liberal" theologians of his day, his approach would change later in his life as he sought to espouse a very different theological type. For

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[5] John J. Hanafin, "The 'Last Buddhist': The Philosophy of Liang Shuming," in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. John Makeham (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 187–218. Ng Yu-kwan, "Xiong Shili's Metaphysical Theory about the Non-Separability of Substance and Function," in *New Confucianism*, ed. John Makeham, 219–251.

[6] Don A. Pitman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 153–195. Ji Zhe, "Secularization as Religious Restructuring: Statist Institutionalization of Chinese Buddhism and Its Paradoxes," in *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, ed. Mayfair Mei-hua Yang (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 233–260.

the purposes of this study, this chapter shall focus on T. C. Chao's earlier, type B thinking; a brief discussion of his latter thinking will nonetheless also prove to be profitable and relevant to the greater scope of this study.

THE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

Perhaps one of the most important concerns of T. C. Chao was the question of a contextual theology. Writing well before the term "contextual theology" was invented, many of Chao's texts refer to "indigenisation." As Winfried Glüer points out, Chao's response to the cultural and socio-political context of his day was very much inline with what many theologians today would call contextual theology.[7] In a very important text on this subject, T. C. Chao writes:

> The basis of [an "indigenized Christianity"] is rested on two factors: (a) The Christians (in China) have come to recognize that Christianity, though deeply buried in the rituals, creeds, and organizations of the Western church, has in fact an unperishable religious reality; (b) The Christians have also come to realize that Chinese culture, though contributing little to the area of science, does have its merits with regard to the spiritual aspect of life. With these two understandings, the Chinese Christians realize that the essence of Christianity and the spiritual heritage of Chinese culture can be united into one single whole. The religious life of Christianity can be injected into Chinese culture and become its new life blood, and the Chinese spiritual heritage can provide the media for the expression of Christianity.[8]

On the one hand, Chao seems to be reversing the nineteenth century approach of *zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong* (Chinese learning for essence, Western learning for application) or *zhongti xiyong* (Chinese essence, Western application). Western learning – or, in this case, Western Christianity – should be the essence and applied in a Chinese learning manner. As we shall see in chapter five, Chao foreshadows the thoughts of Li Zehou (1930–) in the Second Chinese Enlightenment who proposes that China adopts a methodology of *xiti*,

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[7] Gu Aihua (Winfried Glüer), *Zhao Zichen de Shenxue Sixiang* [The Theological Thought of T. C. Chao], trans. Joe Dunn (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council Ltd., 1979), 37–38. Winfried Glüer, "The Legacy of T. C. Chao," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 6, no. 4 (1982): 168.

[8] T. C. Chao, "Jidujiao yu Zhongguo Wenhua" (Christianity and Chinese Culture), in *Truth and Life* 2, no. 9–10 (1927): 248; trans. and quoted in Lee-ming Ng, "An Evaluation of T. C. Chao's Thought," *Ching Feng* 14, no.1–2 (1971):21.

zhongyong (Western essence, Chinese application). But on the other hand, Chao also appears to be echoing the ideas of the modern theologian Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930). The German thinker asserted that a timeless kernel of Christianity can be found hidden deep within a cultural husk formed by and through church history; only when that husk is pried away can the true essence of Christianity be revealed.[9]

From this premise, interpreters like Lee-ming Ng and Edmond Tang have described T. C. Chao as having two stages in his methodology of contextualisation: (1) Christianity must be purified of all Western elements and expressions and (2) Christianity needs to be placed in dialogue with Chinese culture – particularly Confucianism.[10] A more recent commentator, Hoiming Hui, has suggested a third stage in T. C. Chao's agenda for contextualisation: Christianity's ability to fulfil and enrich Chinese culture.[11] According to Hui, this is what Chao meant in the earlier quotation about the religious life of Christianity giving a new life blood to Chinese culture.

However, in many of T. C. Chao's writings, one gets a sense that he has a much broader vision than simply the sinicisation of Christianity and the Christianisation of China. In an article published in the missionary journal *The Chinese Recorder*, T. C. Chao explains why Christianity is needed in China.[12] Despite how others have portrayed the religion, Christianity is not a way of life, a set of rules or an institution. Rather, it should best be understood as a type of "consciousness" – or more accurately, a "Christ consciousness." Christianity is a personal-social experience with a new life finding its origin and completion in Christ. While the hope of his article was to articulate the appeal of Christianity to the

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[9] Adolf von Harnack, "What is Christianity?" in *Adolf von Harnack: Liberal Theology at its Height*, ed. Martin Rumscheidt (London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1989), 77–85.

[10] Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 20–35. Edmond Tang, "East Asia," in *An Introduction to Third World Theologies*, ed. John Parratt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 79–82.

[11] Hoiming Hui, "A Study of T. C. Chao's Christology in the Social Context of China 1920 to 1949," (PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2007), 87–98.

[12] T. C. Chao, "The Appeal of Christianity to the Chinese Mind," *ZZW* (1918), 5:50–68.

Chinese mind, he gives a threefold reasoning for why he Christianity should be received by China:

> In the first place, because Christianity, being a type of life or consciousness, lives and grows only as it is propagated and extended by its adherents, whose own salvation depends in a vital way on the salvation of the world.… In the second place, because the central principles of Christianity are universal love, which weeps with those that weep, and a perfect moral excellence which tolerates no evil in other men. Finally, we are here to create a universal homogeneous consciousness, in order that the ideal social order called the Kingdom of God, or the brotherhood of man, may be realized among us and that international living may be maintained without further brutality and bloody conflict. The reason therefore of our mission here is to give the Christ-life to China, that she may also be received into this kingdom or brotherhood.[13]

So when we discuss his views on contextualisation, the two stages of purification and Christianity's dialogue with Chinese culture are only two parts of a larger scheme.

In the quote above, Chao makes three points. Firstly, he makes a very interesting claim that there is an interconnectedness between the salvation of individuals and the salvation of the world. As though he is reacting against type A Christianity emphasis on individual salvation, Chao believes it is not good enough for us to receive salvation – an individual's salvation is dependent on the salvation of others. In his second point, he gives us a pointer as to what that is: Christian salvation includes the expression of universal love – a deep concern for this world and its people. Writing in a missionary journal, his third point really encapsulates these first two reasons as to why foreigners and locals must articulate Christianity for the Chinese mind. For T. C. Chao, both an academic and an ecumenist, contextualisation is only valid and successful when the local expression can contribute to a "universal homogenous consciousness" which aids the realisation of Christianity's catholicity in the global society.

As we discussed in chapter one, the traditional emphasis of perfection through self-effort is not simply to improve the status of the individual alone, but a desire for the reform of the world through the reform of the individual. We saw this in the 2008 Olympics where the

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[13] Ibid, 5:51.

opening ceremonies in China highlighted the great innovations, technologies and spiritual realities of China and their impact on the world as we know it today. Likewise, for T. C. Chao, his vision is for the development of Chinese Christianity in order for Chinese Christians to participate with Christians around the world in a universal, spiritual fellowship. Salvation is not for the individual alone, but is dependent on the salvation of others, lived out through the sharing of universal love with those in need, and towards the end of establishing a spiritual fellowship. To this end, we will explore more closely these three phases of Chao's theological approach: purification, sinification and catholicisation.

Phase 1: Purification

The work of purifying Christianity required an examination upon those aspects that were deemed foreign or hostile to the intellectual scene of the May Fourth enlightenment. While this included structures and ideas that were Western, T. C. Chao also worked to ensure the essence of Christianity was suitable for the modern era. This task of purification required Chao to focus roughly in the areas of the institution and the doctrines.

The challenges of the institutional church were perhaps one of the largest critiques held by many of Chao's contemporaries. As we saw in the type A theology of last chapter, Watchman Nee sought to correct the many wrongs caused by Western denominationalism. In contrast with foreign paternalism and the subordination of Chinese leadership, Nee's "Little Flock" was an indigenous church movement, led by local Christians and embracing the Brethren value of the priesthood of all believers. Other law-oriented, type A Chinese Christians like Wang Mingdao and John Sung, developed their own ministries – independent from the work of foreign Christians. Their work heralded the three-self principles of Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson for developing a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating indigenous Christianity.

While T. C. Chao largely agreed with the three-self principles, he was not as quick to severe relationships with foreign churches and denominations as did many of his sectarian, law-oriented contemporaries. Firstly, Chinese Christianity was not ready. This was partly due to maturity of Christian literature in China. While there existed some evangelistic material, "What we do not see in the Christian church is a literature that has life, is touched by the throbbing Chinese heart, and can touch other Chinese hearts because it comes out of the subtle life material of the ancient Chinese blood."[14] In contrast, Chao continues, Chinese Buddhism is distinctly different from its Indian predecessor and the Enlightenment writings of May Fourth reformers like Liang Qichao (1873–1929) and Hu Shi (1891–1962) have also shed their Western garb. Likewise, Chinese Christianity too must be stripped of all foreign elements and flowing with the "ancient Chinese blood."

However, the lack of such literature pointed to a more fundamental issue – the lack of intellectual leadership.[15] Firstly, while Christian education must focus on the practical matters of leading and developing local Christian communities, it also must place an emphasis on the theoretical, speculative and abstract scholarship necessary for the academy. Secondly, Christian colleges must encourage academic exchange between Christian and non-Christian scholars and the participation of Christian educators with the national movements. But thirdly, Christian educators must be given the academic freedom beyond strict conservatism to explore and help the church to adapt to new and unfamiliar environments. For many of Chao's law-oriented contemporaries, such intellectual activities would be shunned and greatly discouraged. However, for T. C. Chao, Chinese Christianity needed to develop both the church and the academy for its long-term success. Without a stronger base in Christian education and Christian literature, it would be premature to see independence as a goal of Chinese Christianity.

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[14] T. C. Chao, "The Indigenous Church," *ZZW* (1924), 5:184.

[15] T. C. Chao, "Intellectual Leadership and Citizenship Training," *ZZW* (1926), 5:188–190.

Even if it were able to achieve autonomy, T. C. Chao believed the Chinese church could not exist as an isolated reality – it needed the worldwide Christian community. He was an ecumenist who rallied behind supra-denominational efforts like the 1920s National Christian Council – a Sino-foreign liaison for Protestant Chinese communities. He was also an active participant in the 1928 and 1938 world missionary conferences and, in 1948, was elected as one of the six presidents of the World Christian Council. This is not to say that Chao did not have any problems with foreign denominationalism. He characterised denominational differences like modes of baptism and the eucharist as "unintelligible confusion" to the Chinese mind. In the midst of these conflicts, Chao writes: "We need and want spiritual fellowship with Christians within and without the country, to be one with them, to co-operate with them, to carry on the common task of bettering the world with them; therefore we must have an organized church."[16] He had a vision for the Chinese church to be a spiritual fellowship that appealed for tolerance, rather than schisms.

This pursuit for open-mindedness was not unique to T. C. Chao. This was of course a major thrust of the so-called "liberal" Christianity that became characteristic of many foreign missionaries in China.[17] Also, as an academic, it would have been commonplace for Chao to engage in intellectual discourse with differing opinions. But perhaps even more important, traditions within China's religious ecosystem have had a long history of influence upon one another. Daoism and Buddhism shared with each other their views on meditation and the afterlife; Song (960–1279) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasty-era Confucians liberally borrowed from Buddhist to produce what would become known as Neo-Confucianism (*Song Ming lixue*). As we will see in the next section, Chao himself valued engaging with ideas from other traditions. Interestingly, his "spiritual fellowship" also foreshadows the 1980s–1990s

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[16] T. C. Chao, "The Chinese Church Realizes Itself," *ZZW* (1927), 5:211–212.

[17] Lian Xi, *The Conversion of Missionaries: Liberalism in American Protestant Missions in China, 1907–1932* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997).

when Liu Xiaofeng (1956–) described himself as not belonging to any particular denomination or local church; rather he considered himself as being a member of the "mystical" church, using the language of Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923).[18] Both T. C. Chao and Liu Xiaofeng, over half a century later, held onto a Christianity that esteemed a private faith that could provide theological reflection and cultural insights. But while Liu identified his lack of community as *being* his mystical community, Chao believed the organised church – with all its denominational blemishes – was still necessary to achieve common goals of worship and social action.

The task of doctrinal purification was perhaps Chao's more controversial work. In a milieu where science and democracy were championed by enlightenment thinkers, T. C. Chao writes:

> It goes without saying that in order to emancipate the Chinese mind from dogmatism, conservatism, utilitarianism, formalism, mere intellectual atheism, and animism, those on whom this work of emancipation falls and those who call themselves Christians must be open-minded, progressive, idealistic, full of vital interest in their own personal and social religion and full of a living faith in their personal God and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is only when Christianity takes a strong stand on the authority of nothing but reason and faith not contradictory to reason that its appeals can be made to the Chinese.[19]

The Christian faith must be built solely upon the authority of reason. While the context of the article describes China's intellectual history as something to be emancipated, one wonders if Chao's critiques were also to be levied against his contemporary Christians. As a subtle rhetoric against many of Chao's type A contemporaries, ultimate authority cannot be claimed in *sola scriptura*. Emancipation can only occur if Christianity were "open-minded" and "progressive" rather entrenched in "dogmatism" and "conservatism" like the fundamentalism of Watchman Nee and Wang Mingdao.

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[18] Chen Cunfu and Edwin Hui, "The Phenomenon of 'Cultural Christians': An Overview and Evaluation," in *Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel*, ed. Samuel D. Ling and Stacey Bieler (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1999), 120.

[19] Chao, "The Appeal of Christianity to the Chinese Mind," 5:59.

Though T. C. Chao's theological views would change later in life, during the 1920s–1930s, he considered teachings such as the virgin birth and the resurrection as incompatible with reason and mere *adiaphora*. He labeled other teachings like the Trinity and original sin as non-essentials – albeit reasonable. To him, they were simply byproducts of the West and incomprehensible within China's cultural heritage. For T. C. Chao, after removing all such chaff, only the timeless kernel of Christianity remained: love.

Phase 2: Sinicisation

In the next phase of contextualisation, T. C. Chao believes the essence of Christianity could now be clothed with a Chinese garb, sewn largely with the threads of Confucianism. His rationale behind this is that God, who created the cosmos, has revealed Himself within all His creation. Certainly, through Jesus Christ, God transcendent has most perfectly revealed Himself to humanity. But this does not mean there is no glimpse of God outside of Christ. In a paper entitled "Revelation" prepared for the 1938 Madras Conference of world missions, Chao declares, "All the nations, with their various religions, have seen God more or less clearly, although the forms in which their visions have been clothed are incomplete, insufficient and unsatisfactory. In them and in Jesus Christ, God has been revealing Himself, the same self, to mankind."[20] Here, there seem to be traces of an odd source for this modern Chinese theologian: Karl Barth (1886–1968). Though God speaks most prominently in His self-revelation of Jesus Christ, Barth believes that God also speaks irregularly through non-Christian sources:

> God may speak to us through Russian Communism, a flute concerto, a blossoming shrub, or a dead dog. We do well to listen to Him if He really does. But, unless we regard ourselves as prophets and founders of a new Church, we cannot say that we are commissioned to pass on what we have heard as independent proclamation. God may speak to us through a pagan or an atheist, and thus give us to understand that the boundary between the Church and the secular world can still take at any time a different course from that which we think we discern.[21]

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[20] T. C. Chao, "Revelation," *ZZW* (1939), 5:445–446.

[21] Karl Barth, *CD* IV/1, 55.

For both Chao and Barth before him, Christ is not the only source of God's revelation; the broader, non-Christian (and non-human) culture can also be a vehicle of God's speech as well.

T. C. Chao continues by arguing that China's spiritual heritage contains many sages, moral teachers and heroes who have encountered God. The cosmology of Confucius (Kongzi, 551–479 BC) and Mengzi (c. 372–c. 289 BC), and the "universal love" of Mozi (c. 470–c. 391 BC) all speak prophetically as though they were Old Testament saints. The book of Hebrews reads, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible" (Hebrews 11:1-3, NRSV). Before God fully revealed himself in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, these Chinese sages had a "conviction of things not seen." In other words, their faith was in a God that they knew mainly through their own, non-Christian context. This was a corollary for all world cultures, inclusive of China.

In the last chapter, we saw how Watchman Nee attacked non-Christian religions as being manifestations of the latent power of the soul and, hence, something to be done away with. In contrast, we see T. C. Chao challenging any exclusivist position:

> Who can say that these sages have not been truly inspired by the spirit of our God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ? Who can judge that the Almighty has not appeared to them in His holy, loving essence and that they have not been among the pure in heart of whom Jesus speaks? … The undeniable thing is that God has always been active in human affairs and these sages and teachers show that the Lord of heaven and earth, the Father of mankind and the ruler within human history is not a spirit of narrow particularisms.[22]

He calls it blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to deny such teachings; these truths help guide non-Christian societies, like China, towards God. If God has been revealed in China's cultural heritage, then Chinese Christianity would be irresponsible to not utilise this background, particularly in Confucianism, as a hermeneutical resource. To this end, Chao describes Confucianism, rightly understood, as both a religion as well as a system of ethics.

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[22] T. C. Chao, "Revelation," 5:450.

There has been a long debate as to whether or not Confucianism is a religion. For T. C. Chao, the Confucianism of his day was progressively stripped of its original religious qualities. Confucius did not make any new contributions to the understanding of religious experience and did not urge others to pursue a devout religious life. Hence, some scholars tended to consider Confucius as having no religious outlook at all. But this, Chao claimed, was erroneous. Firstly, Confucius and many of his followers "believed that the universe is an ethical order, with Tao immanent in and permeating it, as the creative ethical urge working towards the realization of its purpose both in nature and in human nature." [23] While this is by no means a personal God like One found in the Bible, according to Chao, both Confucianism and Christianity have at its very core a strong faith in an objective, ethical order. This leads to another religious aspect of Confucianism: forms of worship. This can be partly seen in the strong sense of worship of ancestors and heroes of old. Chao also identifies this in the worship of inanimate objects and forces of nature which were given the name *Tian* – "Heaven" or "God." However, this *Tian* was not merely to be worshipped. Confucians had a desire to be in harmony and in a mystical union with Heaven.

While many May Fourth revolutionaries focused their attacks on its feudalist qualities, T. C. Chao believes this so-called "Confucianism" was far from the original conception of Confucius and his immediate followers. Rightly understood, Confucianism is a religion that provides a moral foundation and a means to address the spiritual hunger of China. However, Confucianism alone can only address a portion of China's existential needs; China still needed Christ. Chao writes, "The religious soul always cries out, as St. Augustine did of old: 'My soul finds no rest until it rests in Thee.' The restlessness of the human soul will find Confucianism utterly inadequate to meet its deep needs." [24] God can be fully revealed only in the person and work of Jesus Christ. But Confucianism – particularly, its ethics – can also

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[23] T. C. Chao, "Christianity and Confucianism," *ZZW* (1927), 5:249.

[24] Ibid, 5:254.

make its contributions to Christianity.[25] The ethical goal of Confucianism is for "humaneness" or "benevolence" (*ren*) is to be pursued by all, starting in the family unit with "filial piety" (*xiao*) and ultimately leading to social "harmony" (*he*). This concept of "humaneness" is quite similar to the Christian understanding of love and the Confucian "harmony" carries the same idea as "brotherhood of man" or, better, the "Kingdom of God."

However, T. C. Chao warns that Confucianism needs to be tempered by Christianity. For example, in living out ones responsibilities with the hope to reach harmony within the family and the society, the self can be lost in the trenches of subordination or blind observance. Chao also saw the Chinese aspiration for a mystical union between Heaven and humanity (*Tian ren heyi*) as destroying one's individuality where the person gives up all emotions, feelings and, ultimately his or her personality for the sake of Heaven.[26] But Christianity esteems the dignity and value of the individual. In the context of the May Fourth enlightenment, this is of critical important to T. C. Chao. The human individual is the basis of modern concepts like democracy and human liberties. If a Chinese paradigm indeed destroys one's individuality, then it destroys the very foundation of modernity and any possibility for China's reconstruction. In contrast, T. C. Chao believes Christianity is a gospel for all of humanity where the love of God is offered to the down-trodden and outcasts of society.[27] While Confucianism does not ignore the poor and oppressed, as history has shown, the Chinese teachings do not have the same fervour as Christianity. Within the Christian mindset, each individual has his or her unique value and contribution to the cosmos. Hence the best of Christianity, partnered with the best ethical teachings of Confucianism, is able to produce a most ideal Chinese Christianity.

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[25] Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 31–33.

[26] Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 30–31. Wu Liming (Lee-ming Ng), *Jidujiao yu zhongguo Shehui Bianqian* [Christianity and Social Change in China], 3rd ed. (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council, 1997), 30–31.

[27] Chao, "Christianity and Confucianism," 5:255.

Phase 3: Catholicisation

As we saw in the beginning of this section, T. C. Chao's work of contextualisation is commonly organised under the two phases of purification and sinicisation. But what was the point of creating a Chinese Christianity? As we have seen, he did not envision a Chinese church alienated from Western Christians. Nor can we presume he simply wanted to encase the essence of the gospel in just another cultural husk. Instead, for T. C. Chao, contextualisation is needed because the world needs China to have Christianity. Type A Chinese theologians like Watchman Nee see contextualisation as clarifying the gospel for the people of China – the emphasis is on the saving of souls with an otherworldly eschaton. However, for Chao, while he still appreciates the value of saving souls, he sees this in relation to a thisworldly realisation – salvation of individuals if for the salvation of this society and this world. He writes,

> To an increasingly large number of Christians… the task of Christianity lies in saving not only the individual but the society in which he lives. To them also social reconstruction is as necessary as individual salvation – necessary both because of the appalling need and because of their conception of the Kingdom of God. If Christianity cannot be the basis of social reconstruction in China as well as in the West, it will fall. The 'possibility' of such social reconstruction is implicit, in the right of Christianity to exist, to spread and to consummate itself in the Kingdom of God.[28]

The social reconstruction that Chao envisioned was for both China and the West. He hoped Chinese Christianity could become a significant member of a "universal homogenous consciousness" – that is, seen in terms of the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God where all may participate in this universal spiritual fellowship.

Now, it must be remembered that secular revolutionaries of the May Fourth Enlightenment also had a strong emphasis on social reconstruction. China had been mired by oppressive foreign powers and, worst, a crippling monarchy. The reforms of the past were insufficient for strengthening China; Chinese society needed to be reconstructed from the ground up intellectually, militarily and economically. Religions were often chastised as being

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[28] T. C. Chao, "Can Christianity be the Basis of Social Reconstruction in China?" *ZZW* (1922), 5:99.

a source of superstition coming from feudalism's past and useless in China's search for modernisation. Hence, religious leaders sensitive to this social condition looked for ways to address these pressing concerns. One example of this was the Buddhist monk Taixu:

> Rather than focusing on the glories of distant pure lands, which were accessible through reliance on the spiritual merit and power of other great bodhisattvas and buddhas, Taixu visualized this earthly world transformed into a pure land by dedication and sacrificial hard work of thousands of average bodhisattvas who were mindful of what their concerted witness could mean. Most Chinese Buddhists were content to prayerfully await their rebirth in a celestial pure land; Taixu was impatient about establishing a pure land on earth.[29]

The focus on an otherworldly pure land resulted in a neglect of the earthly pure land. Hence, Taixu began to reinterpret Chinese Buddhism in terms of the present world in what would become known as Humanistic Buddhism (*renjian fojiao*). While Taixu reinterpreted the otherworldly thinking of Chinese Buddhism, type B Christian reformers like T. C. Chao and Y. T. Wu would reinterpret the otherworldly Christianity embraced by type A Christians like Watchman Nee and Wang Mingdao.

T. C. Chao saw the starting point of this social engagement in terms of a the essence of Christianity: God is love. As Lee-ming Ng describes it, "The fact that God was love did not mean that God was a static entity, or an unchanging constant. The love of God, or the love that was God, was instead a continuously active and creative power, ever striving towards fuller expression and fulfillment."[30] This love of God is, in Chao's description, the "prime moving force" constantly active and working in the universe. It is created for humanity and within humanity. It is the consciousness or personality of God that is imparted upon the personality of humanity. Hence, it was by God's design that humans would love one another. The authenticity of God's love can only be realised in humanity through free acts of love and service. However, after receiving the fruits of love, joy and happiness, humanity pursued only the fruits while forsaking the source. T. C. Chao writes, "Man, after tasting the joy and happiness of love, set out to seek, in ignorance, the life of happiness. But man only sought

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[29] Pitman, 222.

[30] Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 9.

the fruit of love (happiness) and forgot the cause of happiness (love).… Man's selfishness is sin. Sin is the forgetting of the source of happiness – the love of God."[31] He does not describe sin as many type A Christians or Augustinian–Reformed theologians have in terms of the depraved nature, rebellion against God or transgression against the divine law. Instead, sin is "selfishness" (*zisi*) – an intellectual failure where humans have forgotten the source of their happiness in God's love due to a preoccupation with one's own interests in a kind of self-love.

The result of this sin of selfishness is the destruction of our personalities or consciousness – that is, it is the degradation of the love of God created within us. How is this personality restored? Through Christ. But T. C. Chao does not hold to an atonement theory based on judicial imagery like Watchman Nee. Instead, Christ redeems us by showing the love of God, first through his life and ministry on earth and, ultimately, in his death on the cross. Moreover, Christ is our saviour not because of any substitutionary work, but because he paved the way towards God in his perfect life. Though we have lost our original consciousness through the sin of selfishness, his personality, the "Christ consciousness," is the salvific nature that we are able to obtain and be once again united with. Salvation is the ability to be like Christ. Jesus, according to Chao, was often described as the "Son of God" not because of any divine qualities or his relationship with God. He gained this title because he lived a morally perfect life – a title that all humans can obtain.

It is worth underscoring that T. C. Chao believes that the goal of salvation is to recover the God consciousness that was once lost. This is achieved through uniting one's own consciousness with the Christ consciousness. But how does this differ from the earlier mentioned apprehension Chao has with the unity of the theme of Chinese traditional thought –

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[31] T. C. Chao, *Jidujiao Zhexue* [Christian Philosophy], (Shanghai: China Christian Literature Society, 1925),156-157; trans. and quoted in Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 10. Cf. T. C. Chao, "Jidujiao Zhexue" [The Philosophy of Christianity], *ZZW* (1926), 1:88–89.

the unity of Heaven and humanity (*Tian ren heyi*)? In his assessment, the Chinese pursuit is towards an ontological union of divinity and humanity. Yet what he proposes here is not a unity of beings, but a unity of activities – namely, living out the love of God. As we discuss at length in chapter six, this is also a key characteristic within Eastern Orthodoxy. That is, humans are able to unite and participate in the divine activities but never with the divine essence. The Eastern Orthodox assert this distinction to clarify that *theosis* is never to be understood as some form of pantheism or panentheism. Inline with Chao's contention, a person never loses his or her own individuality but is best able to bring fulfilment to it.

Returning to the original discussion, T. C. Chao does not believe that it is just China that needs social reconstruction. Like a prophet preaching to the masses, he proclaims:

> The whole world is clamouring for reconstruction. The devastation of Europe may, after all, be turned from an unequalled calamity to an unparalleled opportunity for the coming down of the New Jerusalem from heaven, if… if Europe has but enough insight! A less highly organized society offers less resistance to reconstructive work. As compared with countries of the West, China is not organized industrially, economically, educationally, politically or even intellectually. Thus Christianity has no better opportunity than the present for accomplishing its task of helping China reconstruct her social order.[32]

Although Europe already has Christianity, Chao critiques that it was losing a grip on the possibility of "the coming down of New Jerusalem from heaven." T. C. Chao envisioned the Kingdom of Heaven as the ideal society where the love of God reigned. Expounding a form of inaugurated eschatology, he contends that Europe has had the potential to actualise the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. But China, being a less organised society, can more easily see a reconstruction of social order and, therefore, be the cosmic epicentre of the coming age. China needs Christianity because the world needs an authentic Chinese Christianity to aid in the creation of a universal homogenous consciousness – a spiritual fellowship in which all can participate.

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[32] Chao, "Can Christianity be the Basis of Social Reconstruction in China?" 5:101.

T. C. CHAO'S PRISON EXPERIENCE

For most of this chapter, we have seen much of T. C. Chao's thought that is representative of a "liberal" or "modern" type B theology common among many Chinese Christian leaders of the first half of the 20th century. But the selection of his writings we have looked at thus far have mainly come from the 1920s–1930s during a time when secular May Fourth revolutionaries tended to champion ideas of science and democracy, and chastise the tyranny of foreign powers and domestic feudalism. But the socio-political situation would drastically change in the years 1937–1949. First, China would be occupied by Japanese forces during the Sino-Japanese War. Then, after the occupation ended, China would have a civil war between Chinese Communists and Nationalists.

For T. C. Chao, his theology also began to shift during this time. We see in an article written in January 1937, at the cusp of the Japanese invasion of China, Chao attacking liberal theology as undermining the very existence of Christianity. He writes,

> The immanence theology of liberalism, which is born of this tension [between science and religion] and which logically places confidence in man's ability to deliver himself and others from his own and other people's selfishness, has been rapidly found wanting. It seems as though the religious instinct of men is surprised at the melting of faith into knowledge in man is attempts to reconcile religion to science. Humanism and scientific naturalism do not seem to gather together sufficient motivation for moral adventures in the face of world issues, when moral adventures on the part of religious people are most needed. Christianity in the West is alive to this.[33]

While it has attempted to reconcile the tension between science and religion, it has sacrificed true religion for the sake of humanism and naturalism. Yet this cannot lead to a sufficient resolution for the pressing moral concerns of faced by this world. Rather, he declares, "man must face his God before he can be a vital means in the up-building of His kingdom." [34] He continues by saying that the Christian movement in China is involved in many noble social

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[33] T. C. Chao, "Christianity and the National Crisis," *ZZW* (1937), 5:401–402.

[34] Ibid, 5:402.

causes – but very little of this is truly Christian. Liberalism was failing China. Chinese Christians must turn back to the true essence of Christianity.

T. C. Chao's change in thinking was gradual. Hoiming Hui believes it found its genesis in 1932–1933 when Chao studied at Oxford University and read more intensely the neo-orthodox works of Karl Barth.[35] Although Chao did not consider himself to be neo-orthodox, Barth would become a more important force in his later theology. Some signs of this could first be seen in the 1938 Madras paper mentioned earlier on "Revelation," a theme quite prominent in Barth's writings and, more prominently, in a short book Chao published on the religious thought of the German theologian in 1939.[36] Chao's convictions changed enough that he decided to no longer remain as an academic alone but would be ordained as an Anglican deacon in 1941.

At the end of the same year, T. C. Chao would face the most decisive moment for his theological perspectives. He, along with other Yenching University professors, would be imprisoned by the Japanese during the Sino-Japanese War for six months. Chao would only write about this event years after his release and the end of the war. [37] Stripped of all normal freedoms, he experienced a time of great struggle and introspection. Coming face-to-face with the profound evils of war and captivity, Chao describes the whole world – himself included – as "drowning" in sin.[38] While previously he would use the idea of selfishness (*zisi*) to describe sin, now he would use the more conventional description of his type A contemporaries, *zui'e* – conveying the idea of "guilt" or "crime" and carrying a much stronger legal emphasis. It was through the sufferings of incarceration that brought T. C. Chao to be repentant, believing he was washed of his sin and that God has a divine purpose for him. No

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[35] Hoiming Hui, "A Study of T. C. Chao's Christology in the Social Context of China 1920 to 1949," 141–144.

[36] T. C. Chao, "Bate de Zongjiao Sixiang" [The Theology of Barth], *ZZW* (1939), 2:1–35.

[37] T. C. Chao, "Ji Yu Ji" [My Experience in Prison], *ZZW* (1948), 2:411–492.

[38] Ibid, 2:417.

longer was Chao's hamartiology explained in terms of the lack of knowledge of the love of God. As we saw him beginning to explain in the earlier 1937 article, a decade later, Chao is able to articulate more clearly his views after experiencing prison: there is an utter inability within human nature to do good.

Likewise, atonement and salvation could no longer be described in terms of simply following after Christ's example; instead, humans are in need of divine grace to receive salvation.[39] He writes, "According to the Bible and the church tradition, there are two kinds of sin: original sin and actual sin. Original sin is the sinful nature bequeathed by our ancestors; actual sin is an individual's own act of transgression.… The sinful nature is the basis of [actual] sin."[40] In his earlier theology, Chao was a freethinking academic who brought together conventional Western liberal theology with Chinese classical teachings of human nature. Yet, under the pressures of war and captivity, this could no longer survive. The ever-present reality of evil forced him to reconsider the doctrine of sin and uphold a more Augustinian–Reformed theological view. Borrowing from interpretations of Paul that describe the "sinful condition," Chao believes that the crippled human state is caused by a "psychological condition" which makes it impossible for humans to save themselves. Humans can only be saved with the help of one who is outside of themselves; salvation from this corrupt condition requires divine grace.

Through war, prison and societal failures, T. C. Chao could no longer hold onto a humanistic theology that simply espoused the human capacity to achieve the love of God; the problem of evil could only be solved with a deep understanding of the doctrine of sin and the

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[39] Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 52–55.

[40] T. C. Chao, "Jidujiao Jinjie" [An Interpretation of Christianity], *ZZW* (1947), 2.141. Translation mine.

This is particularly important to note especially since Lee-ming Ng's important study on T. C. Chao is actually wrong on this point. In respect to Chao's post-prison views, Ng writes, "Chao did not accept the idea of original sin, for that to him was 'morally impossible.' But … Chao's [prison] experience had convinced him of that 'sinful condition' that Paul spoke of…." (Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 55). However, as we have just seen in Chao's earlier statement, his theology would now begin to embrace more conservative views of "original sin" and the "sinful nature."

grace of God. Forty years later, many thinkers of the Second Chinese Enlightenment would visit again the doctrine of sin as a means to address the problem of evil in Chinese society. The Chinese government imposed great hardships on its own people as China went through the Cultural Revolution and the 1989 military clampdown in Tiananmen Square. Christian conversions have occurred by the millions as the majority of churches in China, both registered and unregistered, preach a gospel of individual salvation embracing an overtly conservative theology.[41]

Even within the academy, Christian and non-Christian scholars would write about the value of Christian teachings on original sin, confession and repentance in bringing resolve to the adversities China has recently faced.[42] Bishop K. H. Ting (Ding Guangxun, 1915–), the former head of the government-sanctioned church, is perhaps the only major exception to this trajectory. As we shall see in greater detail in the next chapter, Ting believes that focusing simply on a person's sinfulness would not be "evangelism proper" as it would be a message of condemnation devoid of love and compassion. Instead, he prefers to describe humans as "sinned against" by the evils endured in this world.[43] While this will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter, suffice it to say that his position is an anomaly during the the 1980s–1990s. T. C. Chao and the majority of Second Chinese Enlightenment Christians agree that the presence of evil in the world can best be explained in terms of the depravity of the universe.

What then of the philosophical treasures T. C. Chao once found in Chinese culture? In his reflections upon his prison experience, he writes:

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[41] Alan Hunter and Kim-Kwong Chan, *Protestantism in Contemporary China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 77. Daniel H. Bays, "Chinese Protestant Christianity Today," *The China Quarterly* 174 (June 2003): 494.

[42] Fredrik Fällman, "Salvation and Modernity: Intellectuals and Faith in Contemporary China," (PhD thesis, Stockholm University, 2004) 99–107.

[43] K. H. Ting, "Human Collectives as Vehicles of God's Grace," in *Love Never Ends: Papers by K. H. Ting*, ed. Janice Wickeri (Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2000 [1979]), 43–48.

> Within the free atmosphere of Yenching University, everyone spoke about fellowship, but only superficially and never incisively. I truly believe I was exposed to mistaken influences. People were not intimate with God but only had discussions going round and round about friendship and service without ever knowing what true prayer and worship was. Was there truly any religion?! They also wanted to merge Christianity with Chinese culture, no less forgetting true Christianity, and surrendering it to a collapsed Chinese culture; yet, they did not recognise that Christianity is what Chinese culture does not have, is fundamentally in contradiction with Chinese culture and is able to save Chinese culture from this contradiction. After considering this, I have seen the changes in my thinking these last ten years and have finally come to understand that which has been clearly stated in the Bible.[44]

Over the course of a decade, T. C. Chao had a deepening experience with God. His Yenching University colleagues lacked depth and intimacy in their relationships with God. Hence, their discussions were merely cacophonous chatter. Moreover, he too was once infected with such nonsense. We recall that in his 1938 paper delivered at the Madras conference, Chao asserted that God has revealed himself through China's ancient sages like Old Testament prophets. Yet ten years later, in this 1948 book, T. C. Chao writes that Christianity is paradigmatically contrary to Chinese culture and that the only truth he has found is that which God, through Jesus and the Bible, has already revealed. True Christian theology must come from *fides quaerens intellectum* (faith seeking understanding). T. C. Chao is no longer a type B, truth-oriented theologian. The question must then be asked which of the two other theological types best describe T. C. Chao's later thinking?

We can see in the neo-orthodox theologian Karl Barth, for example, that he would go through all three of the theological types beginning with a type B theology of his former teacher Adolf von Harnack. Then, Barth's theological formations would eventually be targeted against German liberalism; during this time, he would perhaps be best characterised as embracing a type A, law-oriented theology in his use of strict Calvinism. However, by 1956, Barth begins to articulate a type C theology that describes God's "togetherness" with humanity, as achieved through Christ, in history. Justo L. González writes, "It is clear that

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[44] Chao, "Ji Yu Ji," 2:461. Translation mine. Although Lee-ming Ng also translates a similar section of T. C. Chao's text, he takes certain liberties in his rendering which I disagree with (e.g., from *Zhongguo wenhua* to "Confucianism" rather than "Chinese culture"). He also removes certain sentences or phrases which I believe are important in understanding Chao's purposes. See Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 53.

here we move closer to much of what we found in the theology of Irenaeus: History as the context – the sole context – of God's revelation; that what it means to be truly human is known only in the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, for it is precisely in that relationship with God that humanity finds its true being." [45]

Likewise, T. C. Chao's more mature thoughts can best be described as a Chinese type C theology. First, it must be noted that despite his theological shift, Chao still held the position that the Christian has a role in society. Again, social reconstruction was wholly dependent on the salvation of individuals. Through this slow process, the Kingdom of God could be realised on earth in an "historical society." [46] In these later thoughts, T. C. Chao continues to embrace a theology that upholds liberation and transformation. If we are to trust what he has said about his own views, it is out of sheer coincidence that these qualities exist also in China's philosophical tradition. Because, for Chao, these thoughts are reinforced not by Chinese culture (which is contrary to Christianity), but by his understanding of what the Bible teaches.

Secondly, while he previously described God's self-revelation as existing from a number of sources, including non-Christian traditions, T. C. Chao now argues that God speaks to the world first through Jesus Christ and then through the Bible.[47] Here, Chao is much more restrictive than Karl Barth's understanding of God's revelation. Additionally, no longer are teachings about the resurrection or other miracles merely allegories or psychological phenomena. Like a good type C, history-oriented theologian, T. C. Chao believes the biblical narrative must be taken seriously as it unfolds God's eternal purposes.[48] But finally, we must consider Chao's soteriology. As previously mentioned, Chao disagrees with the Augustinian notion of original sin that is embraced by so many type A theologians. Sin is a psychological

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[45] González, *Christian Thought Revisited*, 133–134.
[46] Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 55.
[47] Ibid, 47–49.
[48] González, *Christian Thought Revisited*, 54–58.

condition. Salvation, offered by divine grace, is the mystical work of God that empowers humans to do good. Ultimately, salvation is the fulfilment of an individual's personality and the realisation of the Kingdom of God on earth.[49] At this point, Chao is most clearly operating within a Chinese, type C theology where history is the main context of God's work. T. C. Chao sees salvation as part of God's greater plan to work through human agents and bring to fruition the grand story of His Kingdom.

Within a few years of these theological changes, China's socio-political context would change once again with the communist victory of the civil war. T. C. Chao's support of the new regime and the establishment of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement would be expressed, albeit not wholeheartedly. He would be severely criticised by the Three-Antis campaign (1951–1952) and subsequently stripped of his holy orders in the Anglican church. Under these new pressures, Chao would no longer write as much theology as he previously did. In a sad turn, some believe that by the end of his life, T. C. Chao would subsequently renounce the Christian faith.[50]

CONCLUSION

For most of his early career, T. C. Chao was very much a prototypical Chinese type B Christian. He was very much a contextual theologian of his time that sought the best of both worlds in marrying Christianity with Chinese culture. From the treasuries of Confucianism, Chao stripped Christ of his divinity and esteemed him as an honoured Confucian *junzi*. There was nothing particularly special about Jesus beyond the moral example he represented. In his hamartiology, Chao understands sin not in terms of the wrath of God, but rather in terms of lack of understanding. In describing his prototypical type B theologian Origen of Alexandria,

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[49] Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 56.

[50] Lee-ming Ng, "Christianity in China," in *Christianity in Asia: North-East Asia*, ed. T. K. Thomas (Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia, 1979), 30.

Justo L. González writes, “Type B theology sees our ignorance as the primary problem – not our lack of knowledge of the world, but our lack of the necessary vision, the illumination, to return to the contemplation of the One, and thus to our heavenly home. The human creature is eminently intellectual.”[51]

This is why, for Chao, the remedy for sin – that is, the remedy for lack of knowledge of God’s love – is the perfect example of Christ. Consistent with other type B theologians like Peter Abelard (1079–1142) and Adolf von Harnack, Chao envisions Christ’s main work as being a moral exemplar. Perhaps even more telling of the truth-oriented theology as it is seen in China, Chao describes Jesus as a mere mortal. Within the Chinese intellectual context, this is what Confucians would describe as the *junzi* (“exemplary person”) or what Daoists would consider a *shengren* (“sage”) or *zhenren* (“perfected person”). The man Jesus, with all his moral excellence, is the ultimate example of whom all humans can be. We too can be a *junzi*, just like Jesus; we too can be saviours of the world who show the way of love to others.

Hence, it is from this basis of God as love and our ability to love like God that T. C. Chao articulates his rationale for Christianity as the basis for social reconstruction. “To [an increasing number of Christians] social reconstruction is as necessary as individual salvation – necessary both because of the appalling need and because of their conception of the Kingdom of God.… The truth is that the individual cannot be separated from society, for individual salvation, carries with it the larger task of social reconstruction…”[52] For T. C. Chao, individual salvation, understood in terms of one’s ability to exercise the love of God, has a deeply social dimension attached to it. Here, he echoes the Daoist text *Zhuangzi* that esteems the Chinese ideals of being a “sage” and being a “king” with the phrase “inner sage,

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[51] Justo L. González, *Christian Thought Revisited: Three Types of Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 37.

[52] Chao, “Can Christianity be the Basis of Social Reconstruction in China?” 5:99.

outer king" ("*nei sheng wai wang*"). A person must cultivate oneself inwardly and become a sage with a hope to become a king outwardly and enable others in society to be cultivated as well.[53] This phrase would later be adopted by Confucians who believed inward change could result in outward (or political) change. But this, Chao argues, is also an agenda of May Fourth reformers. They have challenged all of China's human institutions and, leveraging Western thoughts, emphasise the intrinsic value of humanity and introduced ideas of liberty, welfare and self-realisation.

However, T. C. Chao argues that the pursuit of social reconstruction is not only a recent idea occasioned by the May Fourth Enlightenment – it is the very thrust of Christianity as well. Like his secular contemporaries, Chao believes China needs to rid itself of social customs and feudal hierarchy that suppressed the individual and, ultimately, created a "self-incurred immaturity." However, Chao disagrees with the methodology of enlightenment revolutionaries in completely decimating China's ethical spirit. "The old ethics has been thrown away, and so has the spirit of the old ethics. Loyalty, filial piety, and self-denial have been eliminated, and so have all the efforts and determination, and the tears and blood behind these virtues."[54] Secular reformers destroyed not only the shackles of feudalism but also obliterated the impetus for morality without creating any substantial moral foundation in its stead. In Chao's view, the secularists failed. But this is not to say that Christianity's role was to fill the void created with the dismantling of Confucianism. Christianity, in particular Western Christianity, had put an overemphasis on the individualistic side of the faith. This is why China needs not just Christianity, but the best (or essence) of Christianity fused with the best of Confucianism – China needs a Chinese Christianity, with all its spiritual and moral

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[53] Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), 115.

[54] Chao, *Jidujiao Zhexue*, 84; trans. and quoted in Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 15.

characteristics for the social reconstruction in China, and ultimately for the social reconstruction of the world.

Methodologically speaking, although T. C. Chao would perhaps fall mainly within a type B theology, we see here a tendency of his to express type C qualities as Bevans and Schroeder have articulated it. They write, "Salvation [in type C] is human and cosmic wholeness; it is radically this-worldly, but it is not simply material well-being or prosperity; it is about healing, because the world and humanity have been scarred by sin."[55] In terms of the prototypical type C theologian, Irenaeus of Lyon (c. 130–c. 200), salvation is understood in terms of humanity's ability to the grow into greater communion with God. Jesus' work on the cross liberates humanity from Satan's grasp and enables us, and all of creation, to mature and flourish. Hence, type C theology is deeply committed to liberation and transformation.

The problem here is that Chinese type B theologians, like T. C. Chao, also have this emphasis on liberation and transformation. As previously mentioned, Y. T. Wu believes the Kingdom of God can be achieved through establishing an ideal society with economic equality and social justice. Human society can be transformed and, according to Wu, Chinese communism is an ideal mechanism for such transformation. While both T. C. Chao and Y. T. Wu have this liberative and transformative dimension in their respective theologies, they should still be considered as representatives of a type B Chinese, truth-oriented theology.

Firstly, their fundamental outlooks primarily originate from non-Christian, philosophical truths. And yet it is these secular resources, Confucianism and Chinese communism, that, apart from the Christian message, emphasise liberation and transformation. Secondly, type C theologies have a strong sense of God's work in history, from creation, through redemption and into the eschaton. While Chinese type B theologies may also have an orientation to history, it is a history that tends to be worked out only by the hands of humans

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[55] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 68.

rather than by the hands of God. This leads to the final difference where type B Chinese theologies embrace a humanistic monergism – one can reach salvation by choosing to follow after the moral example of Jesus, without any explicit initiation from God. A type C theology like Karl Barth or even Pierre Teilhard de Chardin tends to be either emphasising a divine monergism or a divine–human synergism; either case, God is a significant participant in the work of creation and history. In the case of the type C Latin American liberation theology, despite the fact that there is clearly a Marxist undertone in the writings of people like Gustavo Gutiérrez, it is Christ himself who redeems humans and, in their redemption, works through humanity to liberate the lives of the poverished.[56] In contrast, Chinese type B theologies do not need Christ to change anything in them; Jesus is a mere model to be followed after.

The Chinese type B theology, in contrast with what is portrayed by González and Bevans–Schroeder, emphasises the need for liberation and transformation. But this is merely due to the truth found in Chinese religiosity. It is, like in González and Bevans–Schroeder, largely humanistic and does not necessitate divine help. Under the stresses of war and prison, T. C. Chao's theology shifts towards a history-oriented, type C theology that, in his eyes, becomes much more able to grapple with his context. While he would have a new perspective on sin and salvation, he would still maintain a "liberal" theological outlook in terms of his desire to see society reconstructed. Yet due to the thoroughgoing communist revolution, T. C. Chao would be unable to develop his theology much further.

Writing in 1971, Lee-ming Ng believes T. C. Chao's "liberal" theological approach failed to be effective in addressing the socio-political context of China.[57] In his judgment, Chao's later theology has meaning only for those who are already Christians; it provides little help for non-Christians and a country like China where Christians are in the minority. Yet,

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[56] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, rev. ed., trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 102–105.

[57] Ng, "T. C. Chao's Thought," 59.

forty years later, from a perspective of the Second Chinese Enlightenment, T. C. Chao's later theology is quite successful, albeit underdeveloped. Not only has a gospel message of sin and exclusivist salvation in China been resulting in Christian converts by the millions, scholars (both Christian and non-Christian) have found the theological subjects as significant dialogue partners in a society devastated by the Cultural Revolution, military clash with student protesters in Tiananmen Square and the problems associated with a growing "socialist market economy" (*shehuizhuyi shichang jingji*). During the Enlightenment in Europe, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) and Immanuel Kant sharply criticised original sin as a handicap in the progress of European society, and consequently espoused an original goodness of human nature. In almost an inverse fashion, Chinese traditional thought has tended to esteem human nature as originally good; ironically, in the Second Chinese Enlightenment, the Christian doctrine of original sin has become an important resource for guiding the future of Chinese society.

For T. C. Chao's later thoughts and the writings of many Second Chinese Enlightenment scholars of Sino-Christian Theology, a rigorous hamartiology is critical to understand how to deal with the problem of evil in China. Firstly, it has provided a different ontological basis for understanding the self and the greater society as having a fundamentally sinful nature. Secondly, this basis also assumes the need for something or someone outside of oneself. The sinful nature implies that humans alone cannot determine what is morally right or wrong without a transcendent moral law as a guide. It therefore suggests the need for divine grace to bring about salvation and resolve the problem of evil. However, thirdly, a doctrine of sin in the Second Chinese Enlightenment must interact with the revival in China's traditional teachings. In the midst of China's revival in classical religiosity, Zhuo Xinping (1955–) argues that original sin must be held in tension with the Chinese understanding of

original good.[58] The Augustinian doctrine has conflicts with China's traditional teachings and poses concerns for its long-term possibilities in the Second Chinese Enlightenment. Does hamartiology only exist in such a negative form such that the only exchange is between two antithetical positions of original sin versus original goodness? Is there any mediating voice?

As we move into our next chapter, we will focus on the type C theology of Bishop K. H. Ting. Formulating his theology largely during the Second Chinese Enlightenment, how does he deal with original sin and salvation? It will be important to see the kind of contextual theology K. H. Ting constructs and whether it is able to address the concerns that T. C. Chao was unable to fully deal with towards the end of his life.

[58] Zhuo Xinping, "The Concept of Original Sin in the Cultural Encounter Between East and West," trans. Edmond Tang, in *Christianity and Modernization: A Chinese Debate*, eds. Philip L. Wickeri and Lois Cole (Hong Kong: Daga Press, 1995), 91–100.

4. K. H. TING'S COSMIC CHRIST

In this third case study, we shall explore the type C, history-oriented theology of Bishop K. H. Ting (Ding Guangxun, 1915–). In the previous chapter, we saw how T. C. Chao's (Zhao Zichen, 1888–1979) post-imprisonment theology bore type C qualities. However, his work would be cut short due to the communism revolution. We also find other Asian, type C theologies were developed during the twentieth century that emphasise "liberation" – namely the *Minjung* theology of South Korea and the thoughts of the Taiwanese Presbyterian, C. S. Song (Song Quansheng, 1929–). Many of them have been developed in similar, post-war contexts where there have continued to exist a degree of socio-political conflict. However, besides T. C. Chao's post-imprisonment theology, K. H. Ting is the only major type C representative speaking from and to the context of Mainland China. He is also one of the few Christian thinkers who has been alive and writing in both of China's enlightenments – although most of his constructive theology occurred only after the Cultural Revolution. Bishop K. H. Ting, born and educated in the midst of the May Fourth enlightenment, endures through the communist revolution and, in the Second Chinese Enlightenment, ascends as the new leader of the reinstated Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and newly-formed China Christian Council (CCC).

K. H. Ting's writings in the 1950s–1960s were mainly concerned with political questions dealing with subjects like imperialism, capitalism and communism. These would be the same types of discussions that preoccupied the writings of his predecessor, Y. T. Wu (Wu Yaozong, 1893–1979) and other May Fourth Enlightenment Christians. However, this would change in the 1980s–1990s when K. H. Ting takes the helm of the government-sanctioned church, the TSPM. It is during this latter period where we find Ting more clearly articulating his own theological agenda. Being somewhat sensitive to his changed context, it

is curious that Ting is less concerned with Cold War-era discussions about capitalism versus communism, but focuses more on the new reality where the TSPM is the only legal existence of Protestantism in China. In this context, K. H. Ting frames his understandings in terms of a "Cosmic Christ" (*yuzhou de jidu*). Though he in no way articulates his theology systematically, it is clear that his cosmic Christology undergirds his understandings of sin and salvation.

K. H. Ting can best be described as embracing the "praxis model" to the context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment. As Stephen B. Bevans writes,

> [T]he key presupposition of the praxis model is the insight that the highest level of knowing is intelligent and responsible doing. While, for more traditional ways of doing theology, theology might be described as a process of "faith seeking understanding," the praxis model would say that theology is a process of "faith seeking intelligent action."[1]

Hence, he has focused on a contextual theology whereby Christians in China could best exemplify a God of love. Particularly, this newer head of the TSPM was a church leader who looks at how theological insights can creatively change the Chinese Christian's outlook on life in a communist state. In the early-1980s, Ting was called to become the preeminent leader of the China's government-sanctioned church. As his friend and biographer Philip L. Wickeri describes, this was a time when religious policies were being drastically revised and the TSPM was an expression of Deng Xiaoping's (1904–1997) call to bring structures of governance and authority to the church.[2] But it was also a time when the prevalent rural Christianity could be characterised as largely either Christianised versions of traditional Chinese folk religion or the fundamentalism of Christian sectarian groups of the early-20th century. Hence, K. H. Ting was given the dual task as a statesman and a churchman. To the state, he would need to be a politician able to articulate reforms in religious policies and freedoms; to the post-Cultural Revolution church, he would need to be the chief pastor, giving

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[1] Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 73.

[2] Philip L. Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China: K. H. Ting and the Chinese Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 219–233.

inspiration to rebuild, educate and unify the Christian community. K. H. Ting needed a contextual theology of action to address the needs of this occasion – to be a diplomat both to the church and to the state. That theology would be summed up in a type C, transformative theology that focuses on the Creator of the cosmos Himself: the Cosmic Christ.

THE COSMIC CHRIST

Historical Precedence

The notion of a "Cosmic Christ" did not originate in K. H. Ting himself. It has been argued that this type of Christology has existed ever since the first-century church. A cosmic Christology does not concern itself too much withe the two natures of Christ's divinity and humanity. Instead, it highlights Jesus' relationship with the cosmos as Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer. A cosmic Christology focuses on certain Johannine and Pauline texts and is found in many of the early church fathers, most notably in Irenaeus of Lyon (c. 130–c. 200) – Justo L. González's prototypical, type C theologian. As we read in the first chapter of the gospel according to John, "ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο" (John 1:14, GNT) – Jesus, the divine Logos, became flesh. Through the incarnation, a radical transformation occurs in the relationship between Creator and the created. From this basis and the Pauline text of Ephesians 1:9-10, Irenaeus describes what becomes known as the recapitulation theory of atonement in his famous apologetic text against the Gnostics, *Against Heresies*. According to Irenaeus, Adam was the federal head of the human race while Christ, the new Adam, "recapitulates" or "sums up" humanity in himself. By the disobedience of Adam, humanity receives death; through the obedience of the new Adam, there is a radical reversal of death and Christ reconciles all of humanity and creation to himself.[3] Despite its prominence during the patristic period, this

[3] Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 21–22.

cosmic Christology would lose traction against competing medieval theories. Theologies of the Cosmic Christ would once again be resurrected only in the twentieth century.

In 1985, K. H. Ting delivered an address before students at Nanjing Seminary sharing with them three theological schools of thought – all of which happened to be type-C theologies.[4] It is here that we begin to see Ting entertaining alternative theologies that would ultimately lead to his cosmic Christology. In the first of these, Latin American liberation theology, Ting sees its emphasis on the present life as particularly valuable. Rather than focusing on an otherworldliness that asks whether "one goes to heaven or hell after death. The central theological problem should be the human world, how we enable people to live a life of human dignity once they are in the world."[5] He subtly speaks out against characteristics of Chinese fundamentalism and encouraging his students to think of the values of a thisworldly theology. Ultimately, the Latin American theology fails in the Chinese context because China, according to Ting, is no longer in need of a political liberation since it has already been liberated since the communist victory in 1949.[6]

The term "liberation" (*jiefang*) is used quite broadly within Mainland China, especially by Chinese communists and historians. The civil war with the Chinese Nationalist Party (*Guomingdang*), for example, is known as the "War of Liberation" (*Jiefang Zhanzheng*). Since their establishment in 1927, the communist military forces are known as the "People's Liberation Army" (PLA, *Renmin Jiefangjun*). But most importantly in this context, 1949, the year of the communist victory over the civil war, is considered the year of Liberation (*Jiefang*). Hence, K. H Ting makes a very strategic move. To communists, he clarifies that China does not need any theologies of "liberation." To conservative Christians, he also specifies that China does not need theologies that focus on discriminating between those who

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[4] K. H. Ting, "Inspirations from Liberation Theology, Process Theology and Teilhard de Chardin," in *Love Never Ends: Papers by K. H. Ting*, ed. Janice Wickeri (Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2000 [1985]), 192–222.

[5] Ibid, 194.

[6] Ibid, 199.

will go to heaven versus those who will go to hell. Instead, Ting believes that China needs theologies that concern themselves with questions of human dignity.

When he turns to the next theology, K. H. Ting discusses with great appreciation the first major exponent of cosmic Christology in the twentieth century: the Catholic priest and geologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955). The Frenchman, like Irenaeus, writes as an apologist dealing with the current theological problems of his day. However, instead of addressing the hyper-spiritualisation of Gnosticism like Irenaeus, Teilhard's theology addresses the hyper-naturalism of evolutionary science. After Galileo (1564–1642) and Charles Darwin (1809–1882), Christianity must move beyond a geocentric theology that esteems humanity as the crown of creation. Original sin, rather than being understood as an individual's act of disobedience, should be understood as the antithesis of God's creative work – an uncreative work.[7] With echoes of Newtonian physics, Teilhard writes that every creative action is met with an equal and opposite reaction known as "sin." As the Frenchman articulates in *The Phenomenon of Man*, redemption is a work that occurs in all of humanity and creation.[8] The historical Christ enters the material world, giving evidence of the great love of God, to lead all of creation towards himself. In an evolutionary fashion, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin describes every aspect of creation, human and non-human, reflecting on itself and responding to a self-awareness to grow in specificity and perfection. Rather than an individualised, anthropocentric soteriology, salvation is the process whereby all the cosmos develops and ultimately converges into the "Omega Point" – that is the Cosmic Christ. The church exists as an eschatological sign for the destiny of the cosmos. It is when the church extends God's extraordinary love that humankind captures a glimpse of what is to come when perfect union is achieved with the Omega Point.

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[7] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Fall, Redemption, and Geocentrism," in *Christianity and Evolution*, ed. René Hague (London: Collins, 1971 [1920]), 40–41.

[8] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, trans. Bernard Wall (London: Collins, 1959), 164–174, 262–263.

K. H. Ting's speech to students at Nanjing Seminary occurs during a time when communism and atheism are part of the compulsory education of every member of the Chinese society. However, the legacy of May Fourth scientific rationalism partnered with the Second Chinese Enlightenment's growing interest in religiosity creates ideal conditions for Teilhard's evolutionary theology to be considered. In this context, Ting notes that Teilhard does not focus on the distinction between belief and unbelief; his theology has broad vistas that surpass this insignificant question.[9] Here, we are reminded of Ting's disputes from three decades earlier with self-pronounced fundamentalist Wang Mingdao (1900–1991) who argued that he could not join the "party of unbelievers" in the early TSPM. K. H. Ting's response to Wang Mingdao would be inline with the lessons he is trying to impart on the students in the seminary: Chinese Christians must not be divisive, but must focus on China and its present concerns. K. H. Ting continues by pointing out that Pierre Teilhard de Chardin believes God's creative work is multifaceted and encompasses processes of creation, redemption, sanctification and education.[10] It is not that the Trinity is functionally divided into three tasks where the Father is the Creator, the Son is the Saviour and the Holy Spirit is the Sanctifier. Instead, all of these processes are part of the ongoing work of a single, Trinitarian God.

In a very interesting point, K. H. Ting clarifies: this is no social gospel. While many type B Chinese theologians like T. C. Chao and Ting's predecessor Y. T. Wu have appreciated certain aspects of the social gospel, Ting believes Teilhard has a much more developed Christology.[11] Christ is not simply a great moral teacher that we are to look at as our model. Additionally, there is not any functional division of the Trinity. This implies that Christ is involved in all the works of the Godhead. Not only is Christ Saviour, he is also Teacher and Creator. Through the Cosmic Christ, all things were made. This means that Christ's concern

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[9] Ting, "Inspirations," 202.

[10] Ibid, 203–205.

[11] It would be incorrect to say that either T. C. Chao or Y. T. Wu embraced the social gospel. Their theologies were definitely impacted by the social gospel movement, but they would both have significant differences with its theology as well.

is over all creation since he is not merely the Lord of the church. Against fundamentalist and evangelical theology, Ting believes this aspect of Teilhard's theology allows us to "make the transition from a theology which revolves around belief and unbelief, which is limited to the idea of salvation – a narrower kind of theology – to a recognition of the greatness, glory, holiness and grace of the triune God and see God's work of creation, redemption and sanctification in the universe." [12] In Ting's eyes, a cosmic Christology does not limit God but highlights the breadth and depth of the love of God. On the one hand, Ting attacks what he sees as the simplistic, exclusivist soteriology of type A theologians; on the other hand, he disregards the simplistic, pluralist exemplar Christology of type B theologians.

It is not merely Christ that should be understood differently, but a cosmic Christology affects our understanding of human nature as well. K. H. Ting affirms the belief that Adam's sin affected the whole of humanity. But the whole of humanity is in solidarity with the grace of Christ, being victorious over the effects of Adam's sin. While Ting is assessing Teilhard, he seems less to be describing Teilhard's view of original sin (that is, as an antithesis to God's creative work rather than an individual act) and begins to sound a bit more like Irenaeus and his recapitulation atonement theory. Ting continues by explaining that the whole of the human race – both Christians and non-Christians – are in solidarity with Christ through his grace. Rather than being a message of salvation from eternal damnation, "the message of the gospel is God's love, Christ's grace. Original sin is not the gospel. Original sin has already bowed down under Christ's original grace." [13] Throughout this address, we see Ting downplaying the significance of soteriology. Instead, salvation is the process whereby all of humanity works towards the eschaton to be realised as an ideal human community – the Omega point, where the love of God perfectly reigns. Borrowing from Pierre Teilhard de

[12] Ibid, 207.
[13] Ibid.

Chardin, K. H. Ting declares that humans are “half-finished products” of creation and there is more creative work to be done.

The last theological school K. H. Ting highlights in his address is process theology, which finds its origins in the American process philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947). In his *Process and Reality*, Whitehead argues that theistic theologies originate from one of three traditions: divine Caesars, the Hebrew prophets or Aristotle. The first is the story of the imperial cult of Rome which, after Constantine, was syncretised into Western Christianity. The second is the trajectory of Judaism and its prophets of morality that fashioned God as morality personified. In the last, God is the Aristotelean “unmoved mover” Who is simple and immutable. However, none of these traditions are true of the Christian faith. Christianity “dwells upon the tender elements in the world, which slowly and in quietness operate in love.… Love neither rules, nor is it unmoved; also it is a little oblivious as to morals. It does not look to the future; for it finds its own reward in the immediate present.” [14] In contrast with the three traditions, Whitehead believes the “Galilean vision” of the New Testament focuses on a God of love – the “fellow-sufferer who understands.” [15] As such, a God of love does not impose His divine will, forcing His desires on the world; rather, this highly relational God empowers individuals to have freedom of choice.[16]

Looking at it another way, Alfred North Whitehead describes a God of love as having two poles: primordial and consequent; also, the world has its own two poles: primordial and consequent.[17] While God is primordially one, the world is primordially multiple. Both God

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[14] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1929), 404.

[15] Ibid, 413.

[16] In particular, this is something that the process theologian Charles Hartshorne argues. Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1948), 134–135.

[17] These terms originate from Alfred North Whitehead. Charles Hartshorne explains this “dipolarity” in terms of God’s unchanging abstract essence and his concrete actuality. Ibid, 411. See: John B. Cobb, Jr. and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1976), 47–48.

and the world move conversely towards each other, absorbed into one another, resulting in their respective consequent natures where the world becomes one and God becomes multiple. Ultimately, there is an interrelatedness between God and the world. As some process theologians describe it, God is therefore "panentheistic" – neither completely apart from the world (as in classic theism) nor completely blurred with the world (as in classic pantheism).[18]

K. H. Ting gives a positive review of Whiteheadian process theology. [19] In particular, Ting in his type C theology underscores process theology's fundamental proposition which is also found in the type B, truth-oriented theologies of T. C. Chao and Y. T. Wu: God is love. He is not an imperial Caesar or ruthless moralist or some philosophical principle. Ting, however, makes a peculiar statement about the "panentheism" of process theologians:

> Divinity implies inexhaustibility, eternal devotion and the ability to withstand the provocations of evil, absorb it and turn it to the service and increase of the good. Whitehead said, "Things matter to him and they have their consequences in him." Divinity first and foremost signifies the inexhaustibility of true love in the universe and immanence points to the coexistence of this true love with the entire created world.…
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> Process theologians use the term "panentheism"… [with implications] that God includes and permeates the entire universe; every component part of the universe has its existence in him. What distinguishes this from pantheism is that God's existence surpasses the universe and may by no means be exhausted by it.[20]

When process theologians distinguish panentheism from pantheism, it is to say that God is a distinctly separate being from the universe. In contrast, K. H. Ting makes the differentiation based on the inexhaustibility of God's existence. In other words, since God is panentheistic, His love is infinitely inclusive of the finite world and beyond. The key point for Ting is that God is a Cosmic lover who's love surpasses the cosmos. Yet Ting believes the inexhaustibility of true love is not for the Creator of the cosmos alone, but we too, as co-creators of the cosmos partake in God's creative process. Interestingly, this resonates with the writings of the Confucian scholar Tu Wei-ming (Du Weiming, 1940–) who believes Chinese

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[18] Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity*, 88–90; John B. Cobb, Jr., *God and the World* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1969), 80.

[19] Ting, "Inspirations," 210–217.

[20] Ibid, 212.

thinking is “anthropocosmic” – humans are created to participate in the creative process of the cosmos.[21] There is a synergistic relationship between Heaven/God and humanity where, for both K. H. Ting and Tu Wei-ming, we are imperfect and finite beings called to be co-creators of the cosmos, exhibiting the depths of a cosmic love.

The *Via media*

We can find traces of the Cosmic Christ throughout Bishop K. H. Ting’s writings in the 1980s. One of these texts, referring back to the 1930s, describes Y. T. Wu was instrumental in his shift from a two-nature Christology and towards a more cosmic Christology.[22] However, it was not until a 1991 address in England, in his first public speech after the 1989 student protests in Tiananmen Square, that Ting articulated his own, synthesised understanding of the Cosmic Christ. It would be before a group of former missionaries to China known as the “Friends of the Church in China.” Here, Ting states that the events of the communist revolution initiated a need to reevaluate Chinese theology:

> The historical changes were those since the coming into being of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, which marked the beginning of a period of direct encounter between Christians and communist revolutionaries. In this direct encounter people, including Christians, were greatly impressed by the moral goodness with the new acquaintances, the revolutionaries, manifested and the goodness they could inspire in others. Their frugality, their self-sacrifice, their honest self-analysis, their relentlessness in dealing with corruption within their ranks, their program for nation-building and their humility made them the incarnation of all that Confucius and other sages taught about the virtuous life.[23]

Under his account, Christians were impressed by the extraordinary morality of communist revolutionaries and saw a lacking in their own lives. It is curious that, within this discussion, he is silent about the horrors invoked by communist leaders during the Cultural Revolution

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[21] Tu Wei-Ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness*, rev. and enlarged ed. (New York, NY: SUNY, 1989), 78.

[22] K. H. Ting, “Forerunner Y. T. Wu,” in *Love Never Ends* (2000 [1981]), 73–75.

Edmond Tang argues that the Cosmic Christ can be traced all the way back to T. C. Chao. Edmond Tang, “The Cosmic Christ: The Search for a Chinese Theology,” *Studies in World Christianity* 1, no. 2 (1995): 131–142.

[23] K. H. Ting, “The Cosmic Christ,” in *Love Never Ends* (2000 [1991]), 408.

(1966–1976) and the military conflict in Tiananmen Square (1989). But nonetheless, the moral excellence of atheistic communists have put to shame many Christians.

Now, the group Ting was speaking to was largely composed of former British missionaries to China. The missionary enterprise ended in the 1950s when the communist state ousted all foreigners from the country. So in 1991, in his first public speech delivered after the military clampdown of 1989, he speaks as a delegate from the church in China and gives a report about the progress of the Christian movement in China. Firstly, he comments that teachings on human depravity akin to a type A Christianity have had no ability to account for the moral goodness found in communist revolutionaries. Secondly, addressing many type B Christians, he saw communists practice a life of morals and social change while Christians merely discussed this in terms of Jesus as a moral teacher and social revolutionary. Communists lived out the things that these type B Christians were merely hypothesising. But even more importantly, addressing communists who may be listening in, to post-1989 China, Ting states that communists and Christians can cooperate.

From K. H. Ting's perspective, after 1949, theological outlooks of types A and B have proven to be insufficient for the Chinese context. Enter type C: the Cosmic Christ. A cosmic Christology has arisen as an alternative to the teachings Christians in China once received from these very same missionaries. Instead of being captivated by false dichotomies between belief and unbelief, Christians and communists, the Cosmic Christ empowers China's church and state to work together. Also, we should not attempt a Chinese form of type C, Latin American liberation theology because China, through the communist party, has already achieved "Liberation." To these missionaries, Ting says there is a *via media* than the historically divisive and opposing theologies. By this, I do not mean he relies on the *Lux*

Mundi theology of high church Anglicanism.[24] What I do mean is that he speaks as an ambassador to both the church and the state, and possesses a theological agenda that is strongly focused on creating a mediating voice – a *via media* (middle way) in state-church relations. Therefore, in this first public speech after the 1989 military clampdown in Tiananmen Square, K. H. Ting must be quite judicious in the words he chooses. In a significant move, Ting states that the Cosmic Christ enables communists and Christians to work together.

This socio-political context, in dialogue with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, process theology and, to a lesser extent, Latin American liberation theology, provides the ideal condition for the church in China to create a new theology. K. H. Ting summarises his Cosmic Christ under two major points:

> For Chinese Christians the significance of knowing Christ as having a cosmic nature lies essentially in ascertaining two things: (1) the universal extent of Christ's domain, concern and care, and (2) the kind of love which we get a taste of in Jesus Christ as we read the Gospels being the first and supreme attribute of God and the basic [*sic*] to the structure and dynamic of the universe, in the light of which we get an insight as to how things go in the world.[25]

He continues by saying that China's traditional teachings with their emphasis on the unity of the universe and the benevolence with which it is governed has prepared the way for the Cosmic Christ.

Jürgen Moltmann (1926–) makes an interesting observation that it was the Lutheran theologian Joseph Sittler (1904–1987) who first introduced the notion of the Cosmic Christ to the ecumenical community gathered at the 1961 General Assembly of the World Council of

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[24] In a recent PhD thesis, Li Jieren argues that K. H. Ting leverages the *Lux Mundi* theology of high church Anglicanism and the *Zhongyong* philosophy of Neo-Confucianism in his theology (Li Jieren, "In Search of the *Via Media* Between Christ and Marx: A Study of Bishop Ding Guangxun's Contextual Theology" [PhD thesis, Lund University, 2008]). However, Ting does not come from a high church background and never makes any mention of either perspective in his writings. In contrast, the three theologies of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, process theology and liberation theology are both explicitly and implicitly discussed through many of his writings.

[25] Ting, "The Cosmic Christ," 411.

Churches.[26] While Sittler was attempting to highlight the need to care for this world, many Indian theologians interpreted this discussion to mean that the Cosmic Christ had prepared the gospel in advance in non-Christian religions. Hence, the work of the missionary was to highlight and clarify this pre-existent teaching. Likewise for K. H. Ting, China's past religious and philosophical traditions and present socio-political conditions have set the stage for the Cosmic Christ. In a type of royal "we" or *pluralis majestatis*, Ting reports that "Chinese Christians" have now come to an embrace of Christ's cosmic nature.

In terms of the universal extent of the Cosmic Christ, K. H. Ting states that, "Christ is not so small as to concern himself only with religious or spiritual or ecclesiastical things, or only with believers, or only with making converts of those who do not yet consciously believe in him."[27] Pointing at texts like Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:15 and 17, Ting reminds his listeners that Christ is the sustainer of the universe. It is wrong to think of God as creating the world, only to lose it to Satan's successful rebellion and needing to send in Jesus to rescue only a few. As Edmond Tang puts it, "Therefore redemption is not only a 'no' to sin but above all a divine 'yes' to creation."[28] Ting wants to assert that Christ created and continues to sustain and care for all of the cosmos – not just Christians who have chosen to trust in him. With echoes of Teilhard's evolutionary theology in his words, Ting describes creation as a long process that continues to occur at this very moment. Christ is involved in this creative process, nurturing it to encourage the reign of love, justice and peace. This creative process is something that humans, both Christians and non-Christians participate in. In China, Nestorian Christianity, Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) and James Legge (1815–1897) were fine examples of those who appreciated the creative work of China's non-Christian culture. Speaking to this group of former missionaries, Ting laments the way many later Christians have quickly

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[26] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1990), 277–278.

[27] Ting, "The Cosmic Christ," 411.

[28] Edmond Tang, "East Asia," in *An Introduction to Third World Theologies*, ed. John Paratt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 86.

discarded such approaches as syncretistic. But after 1949, colonialism had come to an end in China, making "the holding of nihilistic attitudes towards non-church goodness untenable."[29] He argues here that Chinese communism, another source of non-Christian "goodness," can and does participate in God's work. Chinese Christians and communists alike are co-creators of the cosmos.

The basic point K. H. Ting is getting at is this: "Atheistic humanism can be our ally as it can help greatly to salvage authentic faith."[30] What is "atheistic humanism"? In one of his first addresses outside of China after the Cultural Revolution, Ting, in 1979, identifies three major categories of atheists: moral bankrupts, honest atheists and humanitarian atheists.[31] The first group of atheists have such selfish and irresponsible lives that they can hardly even consider the existence of God. The second have seriously considered the concept of God and honestly cannot accept Him. The last, the humanitarian atheists, are those who have rejected God "because the God they have been told about is nothing better than a maintainer of the status quo, an opponent of any change in structures and in values, a protector of any social order which is moribund and has no justice in it, a God who gets himself involved in the injustices of the oppressive society. He has taken the side of the oppressor/exploiter class and the exploited and oppressed must reject him."[32] Ting believes humanitarian atheists are those who reject God because the "God" they have heard about asserts only an unswerving dogmatism and does not care for injustice or the marginalised. In fact, this "God" is on the side of the oppressor/exploiter class (or bourgeoisie) rather than being on the side of the oppressed and exploited. Hence, two decades later, after the student protests in Tiananmen square, Ting argues that the universal extent of the Cosmic Christ helps Christians see the

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[29] Ting, "The Cosmic Christ," 413.

[30] Ibid, 414.

[31] K. H. Ting, "A Chinese Christian's Appreciation of the Atheist," in *Love Never Ends* (2000 [1979]), 35–42.

[32] Ibid, 36.

importance of this third type of atheists – the humanitarian ones – in clarifying what the gospel is all about.

This does not mean K. H. Ting upholds a moral exemplar atonement theory like type B theologians. He does believe Christians should follow after the love exhibited in Christ's life and the moral exemplars found amongst humanistic atheists. But "atonement," commonly understood in terms of Christ's work on the cross, is not a major theme in Ting's writings. He has more of a type C liberation (though he would not use this word) or transformation focus, emphasising the other end of Jesus' life – his Incarnation. Referring to Romans 5:15-17, Ting points out that the grace of Christ is much greater than the sin of Adam. But when he talks about God's grace, he rarely mentions the cross or Jesus' death. Instead, it is the Incarnation that profoundly impacts every corner of the universe. In his view, too often, Christians make the mistake of making sin universal while limiting grace to just those who believe in Christ, what some Calvinists call "limited atonement." According to Ting, this does an injustice to the work of God. It amounts to the view that the fall of Adam has a greater impact on the world than grace in the Incarnation of the Son of God. This is diametrically opposed to the universal domain of the Cosmic Christ.

K. H. Ting's Christology has a second emphasis: the Cosmic Christ is a hermeneutical tool for understanding the Galilean vision that God is love. Taking pointers from Alfred North Whitehead, Ting states that God should not be understood as a divine Caesar (or Chinese emperor), ruthless moralist or unmoved mover – God is Cosmic Lover. To put it another way, rather than simply affirm Christ as Godlike, Ting prefers to reverse this and assert that God is Christlike. To understand God as Christlike is to understand God firstly by what was revealed in Christ's earthly ministry – a God of love. Ting, here, finds company

with many type B Christians like T. C. Chao and Y. T. Wu who have tended towards a "love monism."[33] According to Ting, love is the greatest attribute of God.

> We need to relegate to the side all those attributes such as his absolute power, his absolute knowledge, his absolute changelessness, his absolute dominion and majesty, his arbitrariness and intolerance, imposed on God but reflecting largely an absolutization of human beings', especially male human beings', own cravings. These attributes need to be de-absolutized and subordinated to God's supreme attribute of love.[34]

He caricatures that God is too often envisaged with chauvinistic, superhuman qualities. The tendency here is to see God as a cosmic tyrant or punisher rather than as a Cosmic Lover with almost motherlike qualities. Philip Wickeri makes an interesting comment about this in K. H. Ting's biography, noting the closeness of his relationship with his mother. Wickeri writes, "Ting himself has frequently spoken of God's love in relationship to the love of a mother for a son." Referring to this address on the Cosmic Christ, he continues, "One cannot help but imagine that in these words, written in 1991, Ting was speaking of his own mother and father."[35] However, if we are not to speak in terms of "limited atonement" but to focus on an understanding of a God of love, what is K. H. Ting's view on sin?

THE "SINNED AGAINST"

As we saw in the last section, K. H. Ting emphasises the grace of Christ as far greater than the sin of Adam. He believes this was something Chinese Christians had to wrestle with since the 1950s when the paternalism of Western missions was removed and humanitarian atheists dominated the scene. Many of the discussions tended towards a Calvinistic understanding of sin and the depraved nature. Ting asks, "Human beings are of course no angels, but are they, as a result of Adam's sin, so depraved that they are completely insulated from truth, goodness and beauty, each of them, in the words of [John] Calvin, just 'a worm

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[33] Edmond Tang makes this point in "East Asia," 90.

[34] Ting, "The Cosmic Christ," 416.

[35] Philip L. Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China*, 22.

five feet tall?'"[36] Ting recalls that Chinese Christians taught that humans were mere worms, totally corrupt, with absence of any "truth, goodness, and beauty." To be fair, this is not what John Calvin (1509–1564) was saying. The description of humans as a "worm" is a imagery used by both Calvin[37] and the Bible (e.g., Psalm 22:6 and Isaiah 41:4) to highlight the stark contrast between lowly humanity and transcendent God. Although the Protestant reformer believes human nature was marred by sin, humans are not as bad as they could be and that there is a level of common grace, given to the elect and reprobate alike, that is left in the *imago Dei*.[38]

But more than simply this idea of being a "worm," K. H. Ting is concerned with another formulation made by conservative Christians. Ting continues,

> [The Chinese] are likely to affirm that even in war what is disclosed of men and women is not just their brutality and evil, but also their fortitude and comradeship. Then, in the course of the Chinese revolution and reconstruction also, there have emerged countless men and women of courage, ingenuity and self-sacrifice.
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> From this background it is easy to see why Christians who do recognize the fact of sin and human finiteness find it impossible to go so far as to ignore the latent image of God in man and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the world by lightly resorting to the formula of "utter depravity," or seeing with Nietzsche, humanity as "only a disease on the skin of the earth."[39]

For K. H. Ting, he believes that Chinese Christians, stripped of their missionary friends, have articulated a theology of "utter depravity." To be clear, this is very different from the "T" of Calvinism's T. U. L. I. P. formula – "total depravity." The Reformed theologian R. C. Sproul writes, "*Utter depravity* means a person is as wicked as he can possibly be.… The term *total depravity*, as distinguished from *utter depravity* refers to the effect of sin and corruption on the whole person."[40] Hence, total depravity assumes that although Adolf Hitler was an extremely evil individual, he was not as wicked as he possibly could be (as "utter depravity" assumes) and supposedly could have loved his mother and expressed particular instances of

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[36] K. H. Ting, "Theological Mass Movement in China," in *Love Never Ends* (2000 [1984]), 140.

[37] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.5.4.

[38] Ibid, 2.2.17.

[39] Ting, "Theological Mass Movement in China," 142.

[40] R. C. Sproul, *What is Reformed Theology?: Undrestanding the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997), 117–118.

kindness to her. However, this distinction between "utter depravity" and "total depravity" may not have been so clear within the minds of some Chinese Christians. Watchman Nee, for example, uses "utter depravity" and "total depravity" almost interchangeably to describe a corrupted individual who is sinful, yet may also be upright.[41] Regardless of any misunderstandings of "utter depravity," what we find is that Ting believes conservative Chinese Christians hold to a view that sees absolutely no good present in human nature.

Overall, Ting sees Western theology's grand metanarrative as one centred around the doctrine of sin. But this should not be universalised under the label "orthodoxy." The church in China wants a theology rooted in the Chinese soil. Citing Chinese folklore, Mengzi (c. 372–c. 289 BC) and Mao Zedong (1893–1976), Ting explains that a fundamentally evil human nature is absent from most traditional Chinese teachings. While type A Western Christianity emphasises the sinfulness of humanity, classical Chinese religiosity celebrates the "original goodness" of humanity and has a fundamental optimism about the human condition. In Ting's assessment, placing an emphasis on sin in the context of China would unnecessarily universalise a Western-only concept and focus on the "belief-unbelief antithesis as the sole question Christianity asks of humanity"; instead, Christians are to have "a greater appreciation of the unity of God's creative, redemptive and sanctifying work in the universe and in history [whereby] many contemporary thoughts and movements begin to be seen not in contrast with the divine revelation or destructive of it, but are rather aids in illuminating it, partial as they indeed are."[42] With the overwhelming presence of excellence coming from humanitarian atheists, post-1949 China cannot embrace such a sin-centric, Western theology. But as we queried in the last chapter, can Ting provide a hamartiology that mediates anthropologies of Augustinian pessimism and Chinese optimism?

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[41] Watchman Nee, *Spiritual Knowledge* (New York, NY: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1973), 68–69.

[42] Ting, "Theological Mass Movement in China," 145.

K. H. Ting believes Chinese theology must move beyond focusing on a person's sinfulness. Doing so would not be "evangelism proper" because it is a message of condemnation rather than one of salvation. Like Alfred North Whitehead, Ting believes God is a fellow-sufferer who understands the needs and concerns of humanity. Jesus the Cosmic Lover has compassion on the marginalised and dehumanised. While he does not deny that humans are sinners, Ting prefers to focus on the fact that people are "sinned against" – a plight of humanity that has existed since the very beginning. In a church in New York just after the reopening of China, Ting preached these words:

> Bearing in mind what we get out of the New Testament, [Chinese Christians] listen to the Chinese revolutionaries who point out how our people have suffered under and are still bearing the consequences of the oppression of imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism, commonly called in China "the three mountains."[43]

Chinese Christians, according to Ting, along with communist revolutionaries have common enemies: imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism. Nearly thirty years earlier, another man would give a fairly similar speech:

> The Chinese revolution at the present stage is in its character a revolution against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism waged by the broad masses of the people under the leadership of the proletariat…. The aim of the Chinese revolution at the present stage is to overthrow the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism and to establish a new-democratic republic of the broad masses of the people with the working people as the main force…. [44]

This earlier speech was delivered by none other than Mao Zedong. Like Ting several decades later, Mao describes these same three mountains of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism as having unjustly persecuted the Chinese people. Mao Zedong's speech called for all Chinese, led by the proletariat, to unite and overthrow such forces. Likewise, K. H. Ting believes that all Chinese – the Christian and the revolutionary – must unite. Why? Because all Chinese have a common ground. All Chinese have experienced injustices. All Chinese have been subjected to the horrors of imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism. All

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[43] K. H. Ting, "Human Collectives as Vehicles of God's Grace," in *Love Never Ends* (2000 [1979]), 45.

[44] Mao Tse-tung, "On the Question of the National Bourgeoisie and the Enlightened Gentry," *WMT* (1948) 4:207.

Chinese have been sinned against. "Evangelism proper" does not focus on the sinfulness of individuals causing division between believers and unbelievers – it proclaims Jesus the Great Lover who has compassion on the oppressed and sinned against.

Bishop Ting believes this understanding of the "sinned against" is something that many in global Christianity could appreciate. The sinned against are not only in China but in other parts of the world. He continues:

> The sinned against of the world find themselves so helpless and loveless that they almost always tend to form themselves in groups, collectives, fellowships. I don't think the evils of fascist and semi-fascist groups should lead theologians to have an aversion to all human collectives. Human collectives, even those which do not bear the name Christian, can be vehicles of the grace of God.[45]

The sinned against are found everywhere – whether in China or Asia or the United States – and include peoples of all faiths and backgrounds who are marginalised and oppressed. Yet they are not alone. As he suggests with the Cosmic Christ, despite disparate faith backgrounds, people are able to partner with one another and form human collectives (or "broad masses of people," using Mao Zedong's language) that, together, can be vehicles of God's grace. As a human collective, they can experience the God of love.

This experience of being sinned against is not limited to Ting's theology, but is found in other type C, Asian theologies. Instead of using ideas like the "sinned against," the tendency is for these theologies to speak in terms of "suffering." One example of this is the Taiwanese theologian C. S. Song. Song critiques the metanarrative of Western Christianity that asserts that God alone is the chief actor in the Biblical drama. Rather, it is people who are the objects of God's saving work. It is people who were oppressed, exploited and marginalised. It is people who Jesus broke bread with. Together, they revolutionised the social and religious systems and rewrote the story of salvation. Hence, there is a reversal of the Biblical drama. Song writes, "In the people in pain and suffering, in the people tortured and put to death, we witness Jesus tortured and nailed to the cross. And in this Jesus and in

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[45] K. H. Ting, "Human Collectives as Vehicles of God's Grace," 46.

such people we encounter the loving and suffering God.… To say Jesus is to say suffering people. To know Jesus is to know crucified people."[46] Quite radically, C. S. Song declares that Jesus is the crucified people. Or perhaps, to borrow K. H. Ting's expression, Jesus is the sinned against. What we see in C. S. Song and other type C Asian theologies is a crucicentrism – something quite sparse in Ting's published addresses. Ting's tendency, however, is to speak with more of a Maoist imagery, describing the enemies of China's "sinned against" in terms of the three mountains of imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism. Hence, his "sinned against" attempts to produce a mediating voice – a *via media* between the original sin of Western Christianity and the original goodness of Chinese teachings – and form a bridge for Chinese Christians and Chinese communists to empathise with one another.

Interestingly, while K. H. Ting's hamartiology shifts from the "sinner" to the "sinned against," this is inconsistent with most other Second Chinese Enlightenment Christians. The vast majority of Chinese churches of this time, both government-sanctioned and unregistered, maintain fundamentalist or evangelical theological dispositions. The tendency is to emphasise one's sinful nature and need for individual salvation. Significantly, even amongst many scholars of Sino-Christian theology, sin, confession and repentance are major themes throughout their writings.[47] The scholar Liu Xiaofeng, for example, has argued that the doctrine of original sin is an idea that is much needed in the Chinese context.[48] He highlights

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[46] C. S. Song, *Jesus, the Crucified People*, vol. 1, *The Cross in the Lotus World* (New York, NY: Fortress Press, 1996), 216.

[47] Zhuo Xinping, "The Concept of Original Sin in the Cultural Encounter Between East and West," trans. Edmond Tang, in *Christianity and Modernization: A Chinese Debate*, eds. Philip L. Wickeri and Lois Cole (Hong Kong: Daga Press, 1995), 91–100. Fredrik Fällman, "Salvation and Modernity: Intellectuals and Faith in Contemporary China," (PhD thesis, Stockholm University, 2004), 99–107. Yang Huilin, *Zui'e yu Jiushu: Jidujiao Wenhua Jingshen lun* [Sin and Atonement: The Spirit of Christian Culture] (Beijing: Dongfang Chubanshe, 1995). Zhang Qingxiong, "Sin and Evil in Christian and Confucian Perspectives," in *Christianity and Chinese Culture*, eds. Miikka Ruokanen and Paulos Huang (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 22–36.

[48] Liu Xiaofeng, "Joy in China, Sin in Christianity? A Comparison," trans. by Georg Evers, *China Study Journal* 7, no. 3 (1992):17–25.

that Chinese traditional thought speaks in terms of one's "inner-transcendence." The Daoist text *Zhuangzi*, for example, speaks of the two Chinese ideals of being a "sage" and a "king" with the phrase "inner sage, outer king" ("*nei sheng, wai wang*").[49] The implication here is that as one cultivates oneself and becomes a sage inwardly, this would enable him or her to become a king outwardly and cultivate others. But for Liu, this inner-transcendence is impossible. The Augustinian doctrine is a corrective that highlights the human inability to save oneself and the need for an outer-transcendence – that is, divine grace. The emphasis of most Second Chinese Enlightenment Christians is introspectively on the sinner, rather than a discussion about those who are sinned against.

This reminds us of T. C. Chao's thoughts while in prison where he rediscovers sin and repentance. The understanding of one's sinfulness has given many Chinese Christians the ability to grapple with the problem of evil. The sinful nature is important in a society that has vivid memories of the Cultural Revolution and the student-military clash at Tiananmen Square, and continues to experience new ills introduced by a "socialist market economy" (*shehuizhuyi shichang jingji*). For these thinkers, the sinful nature does not find a common enemy outside of the individual (e.g., imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism). Instead, the sinful nature explains the common enemy within all of us – atheistic communists and Christians. And, while Ting argues that an exclusivistic, conservative theology leads to the belief-unbelief antithesis, as we discussed in the end of the last chapter with T. C. Chao's later theology, it seems as though a gospel message of sin and salvation is addressing the existential needs for many in the Second Chinese Enlightenment. Bishop Ting's disagreement with teachings about the "sinner" seem more to be focused on the fundamentalism he had been fighting ever since his debates in the 1950s with Wang Mingdao, than in the growing socio-political context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment. After all,

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[49] Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), 115.

are even these three communist enemies of imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism still valid in China?

Nevertheless, for Bishop Ting, a hamartiology of the "sinned against" enables Chinese Christians to create human collectives and partner with humanistic atheists who suffer the same plight. But if this is the case, what is his solution to the human condition?

REASSESSING "JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH"

The Protestant understanding of salvation has historically rooted itself in Martin Luther's emphasis on "justification by faith." However, K. H. Ting has been accused of distorting this teaching and replacing it with a view of "justification by love" (i.e., salvation by good works).[50] In his defence, Ting has responded saying he has never used such verbiage and believes that justification by love "is a poor and misleading imitation of justification by faith."[51] While the term itself is not found in Ting's writings, the idea originates perhaps from his frequent critiques of Reformation ideals. Like with his shift from "sinner" to "sinned against," Bishop Ting sees the Chinese church emphasising this doctrine to the demise of a God of love. Love is the greatest attribute of God, over and above all other attributes. Yet the majority of Second Chinese Enlightenment Christians, predominantly coming from a type A disposition, uphold justification by faith as essential to the gospel message. Ting disagrees with this position. Excessive talk of this teaching engenders a spirit of hatred against those who do not have "faith," widening the chasm found within the belief-unbelief antithesis.

In a 1996 speech before a meeting of peoples from different religions, Bishop K. H. Ting addresses what he sees as problems with the doctrine of justification by faith. He begins anecdotally telling his audience that many Christians from throughout China have written to

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[50] Thomas Wang, foreword to Li Xinyuan, *Theological Construction — or Destruction: An Analysis of the Theology of Bishop K. H. Ting (Ding Guangxun)* (Streamwood, IL: Christian Life Press, 2003), 7.

[51] K. H. Ting, *God is Love: Collected Writings of Bishop K. H. Ting* (Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries International, 2004), 621.

him concerned with the type of justice executed by a God who sends non-believers to hell. Referring to the Pharisees and their exaggeration of Jewish teachings, Ting critiques this as an adulteration of God's justice. This, in his view, is what has happened with the doctrine of justification by faith. Ting comments,

> Therefore, historically, when advanced religious people like Paul and Martin Luther put forward justification by faith, it was to extend justice, oppose the dark forces of authority, cleanse and simplify religion and seize freedom for the people. The original meaning of justification by faith was progressive. It was a banner of human liberation. Its goal was never to consign people to hell.[52]

The doctrine, he says, was initially designed to liberate and empower people rather than to punish people to hell. For "advanced religious people" like Paul and Martin Luther, this was a corrective against the extreme injustices imposed, respectively, by the Pharisees and medieval Catholicism.

Ting laments that the foreign missionary enterprise to China in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries abused the doctrine of justification by faith by connecting it with a concept of paradise and hell. Many Chinese, anxious to reach heaven, became converts. Those who remained unbelievers, would therefore be consigned to hell. Ting believes this advanced an antinomianism within Chinese Christianity where God has no care for the good deeds performed by people. Citing a number of communist archetypes, Ting sorrowfully asks, "How can we tolerate the idea that they are now in hell?" [53] These people lived extraordinary lives of love and true sacrifice – they were children of a God of love. Before a group of peoples from various religious faiths, Ting confidently declares that the Great Lover spoken of in the Christian Bible would never condemn individuals to eternal damnation in hell because they did not believe in him. As a solution to the human condition (the "sinned against"), Bishop Ting wants to provide a new understanding of redemption that moves beyond relegating individuals to heaven or hell.

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[52] K. H. Ting, "On a Profound Christian Question," in *Love Never Ends* (2000 [1996]), 507.
[53] Ibid, 508.

Many Christians, in K. H Ting's view, have divided the Trinity by identifying the Father as Creator and the Son as Saviour. Hence, God the Father began and completed the work of creation in six days. This world was subsequently captured by Satan. Therefore, Jesus' main work was to sneak into Satan's dominion and rescue only a few. This creates a false dichotomy between creation and redemption, emphasising the latter at the expense of the former. Regarding this view as erroneous, K. H. Ting believes it leads to a heretical disconnect of the Trinity. Such an understanding effectively creates two gods – a Lord of Creation and a Lord of Redemption. Moreover, he regards Christians embracing such a teaching as practicing an amoral religion which limits Christianity to the salvation of individual souls and ignoring the cares of this world.[54] It seems as though Ting's criticisms are mainly aimed at type A Christians like Wang Mingdao and Watchman Nee who emphasise an individualised salvation and a proleptic eschatology.

Instead of limiting God's creative work to a week, K. H. Ting prefers to describe creation as a work-in-progress. His cosmic Christology asserts that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are all always Creator. Ting writes, "A few individuals are not the only objects of redemption. The whole creation, the whole world is the object of Christ's work of redemption. We are half-finished products, and our duty is to assist God in the project of creation and at the same time, transform ourselves from half-finished, to finished, products. Creation contains redemption; the purpose of redemption is to fulfill God's creation." [55] Borrowing from the lexicon of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, K. H. Ting holds strongly to a view of redemption that identifies humans as "semi-finished products" or "half-finished products." Humans are created by God incomplete. The purpose of redemption, then, is to finish God's creative work. Creation and redemption have a deep connection and neither are limited to a

[54] K. H. Ting, "Creation and Redemption," in *Love Never Ends* (2000 [1995]), 481.
[55] Ibid, 480.

select number of individuals. God's creative work is still in progress, in both Christians and non-Christians alike.

What then is the task of evangelism? Ting responds, "Christ instructed his disciples to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. When a person finds in Christ his or her salvation, it is most natural for the person to want to tell others of Christ, and that is evangelism."[56] Going against the tendency of most Chinese Christians in the Second Chinese Enlightenment, Bishop Ting disagrees with an exclusivist soteriology. In a form of universalism, Ting believes that everybody already has possession of salvation in their own ways. Some discover it in Christ. Others discover it in communism. However, none of these sources of salvation, in Ting's perspective, changes their status before God. Evangelism is only a matter of telling others about Christ. This is the gospel of Bishop K. H. Ting's Cosmic Christ. God created every person as a semi-finished product and continues a work of redemption in everyone.

In the end of his 1996 address before the group of all religions, Bishop Ting states that lives of high morality found in Christianity and other religions far surpasses any discussion about paradise.[57] He tells his multi-faith audience, "From [the gospels] we know that though Jesus sometimes spoke of paradise and hell, he never made belief/unbelief the standard for whether a person went to heaven or hell.… In the last judgment described [in Matthew 25:31–46], God does not ask whether we were believers or non-believers. He asks what we did for the impoverished."[58] Ting notes that nowhere is there a comment about whether or not individuals believe. The focus is on ethics. Rather than asking questions about belief or unbelief, God is concerned about how individuals care for the impoverished. K. H. Ting states that a religious message that focuses on ethics rather than an exclusivist salvation can more easily be conveyed and received. In some ways, it seems as though Ting preempts his

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[56] K. H. Ting, "An Interview on the Present-Day Church Situation," in *Love Never Ends* (2000 [1990]), 393.

[57] Ting, "On a Profound Christian Question," 510.

[58] Ibid, 508–509.

multi-religious listeners of what is to come a decade later. In 2005, the state administration under the General Secretary Hu Jintao and the Premier Wen Jiabao presented the vision of China to develop a "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*). Invoking Confucian ideals of harmony and morality, Ting and the latter administration have painted an eschatological vision where Christians, communists, Buddhists, Muslims and people of all others faiths are ultimately united with one another and with Heaven, the Omega Point and Cosmic Christ. However, does this "panentheism" fail to preserve the individuality that T. C. Chao claimed was missing from Chinese traditional thought?

CONCLUSION

Despite all attacks levied against Bishop K. H. Ting, it would be a mistake to see him as failing as a church leader in China during the Second Chinese Enlightenment.
It would likewise be wrong, as one commentary has put it, to accuse Ting of believing that "through him and his atheist allies' humanist efforts, one attains a superior faith, that is, Communism."[59] This would be to completely miss the point of his theological formulations and his important contribution to Christianity (and religion) in China today. As stated in the very beginning of this chapter, K. H. Ting's methodology of contextual theology has mainly been one of praxis as he has balanced his dual roles before the communist state and the Christian church. Even the great scholar T. C. Chao, despite his academic prowess and religious piety, would towards the end of his life ultimately waver in his relationship with the government and the church. In contrast, Bishop Ting has developed a theology which has allowed him to work in tension between two competing forces and find goodness in both spheres. Moreover, it has enabled him to affect state legislation about religious policies and freedoms, being instrumental in shaping important government legislation on religion like the

[59] Li Xinyuan, *Theological Construction — or Destruction: An Analysis of the Theology of Bishop K. H. Ting (Ding Guangxun)* (Streamwood, IL: Christian Life Press, 2003), 39.

36th article of the constitution and "Document 19."[60] It has also given him the resources to work and lead a theologically broad Chinese church. Yet in so doing, K. H. Ting has inevitably also found enemies among both Christians and communists.

Theologically speaking, Ting is correct in saying the theological scales in China have been overbalanced in theologies of type A and type B. The tendency of both has been to be too focused on the socio-political context. For type A, much of the theology has been developed in radical opposition to the Chinese situation. Type B theologies have tended to do the opposite and be in radical embrace of the truths found in the context. While Ting is also responding to his times and attempting to bridge the "belief–unbelief antithesis," he does so by transcending the Christian and non-Christian orders and by speaking in terms of the universal concerns of his cosmic Christology. However, it is also very clear that his intentions are to address the division between Christians and atheists in China and the difficulties of the relationship between the church and the state. But is this approach valid in the Second Chinese Enlightenment?

As has been discussed in great detail, theologies that focus on the sinful nature and an exclusivist soteriology are very important in the context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment. In contrast, Bishop K. H. Ting's theology of the Cosmic Christ, the sinned against and a creation–redemption soteriology have been attacked as heretical, compromising the gospel and ultimately destroying the church. His *via media* is perhaps not balanced enough. While his theology may be useful in bridging the chasm between Chinese Christians and Chinese communists, K. H. Ting's thinkings appear to be more divisive than helpful in the unity of the Chinese church. In the last chapter, it was stated that T. C. Chao was unable to fully develop his type C theology in the context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment.

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[60] Philip L. Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China*, 211–215.

In my judgment, though K. H. Ting has creatively provided his own type C theology for China, his hamartiology and soteriology have failed to properly address his present context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment and is anachronistically stuck in the 1950s debates with the fundamentalism of Wang Mingdao. He constantly uses Maoist language in a post-Mao China that, after Deng Xiaoping, has become quite apprehensive about the emphasis of any Maoist dogmatism. Yet he does so because he feels the most pressing theological issue for the church in China is its survival under a communist state. Additionally, while it may be true that fundamentalism still exists in the Chinese church today, it provides a vitally important voice in addressing the existential concerns of the Second Chinese Enlightenment. Conservative Protestant Christianity will not be eradicated from China anytime soon. So if Ting's theology has failed in the Second Chinese Enlightenment, is there perhaps another resource for developing a type C theology useful for the Chinese context and able to be a strong voice in the context of contemporary Chinese Christianity?

A particularly curious point of contact can be found in K. H. Ting's theology and Chinese traditional teachings: the Chinese axiom of *Tian ren heyi* (unity between Heaven and humanity). One recent commentator, Miikka Roukanen, sees *Tian ren heyi* as a useful motif in engaging Ting on two points. Firstly, he believes K. H. Ting's cosmic Christology shares with the Chinese axiom the notion of human-divine cooperation – synergy, if you will. But secondly, Roukanen writes:

> *Tianren heyi* is the foundation of classical Confucian ethics, which emphasizes harmony between Heaven, nature, and humanity.… In classical Confucian thinking, harmony is the supreme form of value and goodness, and harmony of the mind and the harmony of the social behavior belong together.
>
> As we have seen, K. H. Ting often emphasizes… the harmony between those who have a religious faith and those who do not [*sic*] as well as a harmony between different kinds of faiths and believers. Harmony is certainly a religious concept, but it is even more a fundamental moral idea of the traditional Chinese culture. It is a concept that might become a fruitful point of contact between classical Chinese ethics and Chinese Christian ethics.[61]

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[61] Miikka Ruokanen, "K. H. Ting's Contribution to the Contextualization of Theology in China," *Modern Theology* 25, no. 1 (Jan. 2009): 119–120.

The Confucian harmony extends not only between Heaven and humanity, but also between the sacred and the secular – the very goal K. H. Ting has.

Although Miikka Roukanen does not bring up this point, there is perhaps a third case where the unity of Heaven and humanity (*Tian ren heyi*) plays an important role in Ting's thoughts. K. H. Ting, borrowing from the writings of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Whiteheadian process theology, holds to an eschatological vision where all of humanity can find ultimate unity in the Omega Point. However, in this endeavour, we must be mindful of a problem T. C. Chao highlighted in regards to this Chinese epithet: does a mystical union between Heaven and humanity destroy one's individuality? If Ting truly embraces the eschatological outlook of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and process theologians, then his Omega Point ultimately shifts the multiplicity of individuals in this world into the oneness of Christ, resulting in a blurring of uniqueness and a destruction of human individuality. This is very problematic in an enlightenment context where the value of the individual forms the basis of such ideas as democracy and human freedom.

In the next two chapters, we will explore the possibilities of another theological resource, Byzantine theology, and its discussions on sin and salvation in the context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment. In this other type C theology, we find many of the same correctives that K. H. Ting tries to invoke upon the Chinese church. The type C theology of Eastern Orthodoxy also holds to a view where there is unity between humanity and the divine: *theosis*. However, as we shall see in chapter six, Eastern Orthodoxy attempts to address the problem raised by T. C. Chao in what is called the essence–energies distinction. Byzantine thought also views sin and salvation quite different from the formulations of Bishop K. H. Ting and forms a mediating voice between theological types A and B. However, is this ancient theological paradigm still valuable in modern China?

5. *THEOSIS* AND CHINA: PART I

As we have seen thus far, the major thinkers of Chinese theology across the two Chinese enlightenments have tended to follow the trajectories of theological types A and B, especially as developed from Western or Latin Christianity. It is curious that, in Chinese theology's need to be cohesive within the Christian tradition, thinkers have not shown much interest in Eastern Christianity. Moreover, while debates on the contextualisation of Christianity were of much interest among May Fourth Protestants, the major concerns were somewhat different in Chinese communities of Catholic or Orthodox Christians. As previously discussed, May Fourth Chinese Catholics tended to be bound by scholasticism while Eastern Orthodoxy in China has and still is focused on ministering to the Russian expatriate communities residing in China. While these Protestant reformers were eager to strip Christianity of its foreign label, it was foreign theologies of Latin origins that served the basis of their theological reflection. Yet at the same time, the Chinese traditional religions and socio-political concerns also played an important role in their thought process. As discussed in chapter one of this study, this is largely the result of attempts to construct a new hyphenated or hybridised identity of "Chinese Christian" where theologians must reconcile between what it means to be both "Chinese" and "Christian."

THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE THREE TYPES

Over the course of the last three chapters, we have focused this study on three important figures in Chinese theological history. Each of them represented a particular theological type and helped elaborate the common dispositions of each approach. As we look towards the future of Christian theology during the Second Chinese Enlightenment, we must learn from the past and understand the basic concerns that these individuals attempted to

address. We must engage core enlightenment questions about modernity and nation-building. But we also must be conscious of the concerns that are present in Chinese society today as the country continues to recover and restore its *homo religiosus*. The Second Chinese Enlightenment's search for a religiosity is part of a yearning to address the concerns of the human condition as provided by the Chinese context. However, as we discussed in chapter one, this has been part of the greater theological question of the nature of humanity, though the theological solution is often formulated in a different category (e.g., soteriology, ecclesiology or Christology).

Even among our three representatives, we can see how the major interests for each of them is around the question of theological anthropology. The type A, law-oriented theology of Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng, 1903–1972), for example, takes a countercultural approach to the greater socio-political context. While the May Fourth Enlightenment preached a hyper-secularised gospel, Watchman Nee spoke of a hyper-spiritualised reality. It is not good enough for a person to become a Christian since, even after conversion, the individual may still be living as a "soulish man." Hence, Watchman Nee's theological teachings describe a soteriology – or, more precisely, an *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) whereby the individual becomes regenerated and sanctified. However, the goal of salvation is to ultimately become a "spiritual man" who has overcome this world and lives the "normal" Christian life.

When we look at the type B, truth-oriented theology of T. C. Chao (Zhao Zichen, 1888–1979), again the question of theological anthropology plays an important role. In the case of Watchman Nee, he was reticent about utilising any "latent power of the soul" found in one's natural abilities or other religions. However, for Chao, this academic scholar looked to Chinese philosophies and religions as well as the progress of May Fourth humanism for resources for the purification and the subsequent sinification of Christianity. Only then would a capable Chinese Christianity be a significant contributor and leader in the "universal homogenous consciousness." While individual salvation was important to Chao, it was seen

to be vitally connected with the reconstruction of society and the exercise of the universal love of God. Only then could the consciousness of the individual find unity in the consciousness of Christ. While the goal of Watchman Nee's theology is to see individuals reach the goal of being "spiritual men," T. C. Chao's theology is to develop a new ecclesiology where individuals are part of a global, "spiritual fellowship."

Finally, in the last chapter, we explored the type C, history-oriented theology of K. H. Ting (Ding Guangxun, 1915–). As a churchman and a statesman, the head of the TSPM has needed to develop a theology to mediate between the church and the state. Coming out of a time of Maoist dogmatism, Bishop Ting has articulated a cosmic Christology to highlight (1) the universal extent of Christ's domain, concern and care and (2) the kind of love witnessed in Jesus Christ through the gospels. Yet why does he develop a theology of the Cosmic Christ? K. H. Ting attempts to address what he calls the "belief–unbelief antithesis" whereby communists are discriminated by the theology of conservative Christians. He hence attacks what he sees as a sin-centric theology and speaks of the "sinned against," and shuns the doctrine of "justification by faith" and instead is impressed by God's love to humanitarian atheists. Watchman Nee focuses on the spiritual man and T. C. Chao on the spiritual fellowship. Ting likewise has an interest in theological anthropology – though he formulates it in his Christology. For K. H. Ting, the Cosmic Christ highlights the common ground that Christians and communists can share. Ultimately, his Cosmic Christ speaks about the goodness of all humanity and the work of God that includes both Christians and non-Christians alike.

There have been several theological constants that Chinese Christians continually need to grapple with. However, each Christian thinker tends to give priority to certain theological constants more than others – whether it be soteriology, ecclesiology, Christology or any other theological category. As we continue in this chapter, we shall see how an examination into the history of the two Chinese enlightenments and theology developed within these contexts

shows that Byzantine themes, particularly around the soteriological category of *theosis*, arise from within the Chinese contextual theologies. Yet, the understanding of salvation is closely related to theological questions around subjects such as the human condition and one's moral responsibility. What we will find is that there are certain themes which are important both in Eastern Orthodoxy and in Chinese thought among the majority of thinkers, both Christians and non-Christians.

Additionally, it will be of particular importance to understand certain aspects of China's religious and philosophical tradition. While all of China's ancient teachings were attacked or reformed during the May Fourth Enlightenment, they have found a renewed significance in this latter period, during the Second Chinese Enlightenment, in the revival of these teachings known as the *zongjiao re* (religious fever). No Chinese contextual theology can exist without reckoning with the Chinese traditional teachings. It must be recognised that China has a multifaceted religious ecosystem. On the one hand, much of it involves the more commonly referred to traditions of the *sanjiao* (three teachings) of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. But it also involves what C.K. Yang (Yang Chuanguang, 1933–2007) calls diffused religions like folk religions, ancestral worship and other religious elements that are not institutionally mediated as the *sanjiao*.[1] Additionally, there are other philosophical traditions that have played an important role in China's present context – most notably being communism. While Chinese religious and philosophical teachings are quite broad and exist with many nuances, our focus will primarily be from key representatives and teachings of the *sanjiao* of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, and a bit also from communism. By no means shall this be all-encompassing but, at minimum, we will see some of the basic tendencies of certain aspects of the Chinese religious and philosophical mindset.

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[1] C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of their Historical Factors* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1991), 294–340.

Seen from the larger scope of this present study, there are at least three major themes that have shown prominence in the two Chinese enlightenments and Byzantine theology: sin, synergy and union. For the remainder of this chapter, we shall see how these three themes have played out in Chinese theology. From this basis, chapter six will explore these same themes from the theological viewpoint of Eastern Orthodoxy and see how this other "Eastern" theology can provide a fuller picture of Christianity within the Chinese religious ecosystem.

CHINESE THEOLOGY IN REVIEW

Sin: *Zui'e* or *Zisi*

The doctrine of sin is a fairly important theme within Christian theology and, in the West, was largely affected by the teachings of Augustine. Likewise, it has played a significant role in the Chinese context. Initially translated by foreign Protestant missionaries as *zui'e*, this Chinese neologism takes ideograms that convey ideas of "guilt," "crime" and "evil." This differs from the Catholic vocabulary that commonly uses the word *zuiguo* to translate "sin" and to communicate more an idea of "transgression." In contrast, the Protestant rendering of *zui'e* carries legal and moral qualities whereby the missionaries translated both a linguistic term as well as a theological interpretation along with it. Law-oriented, type A Chinese thinkers largely embraced this understanding of sin. During the May Fourth Enlightenment, the type A theologies of Watchman Nee, Wang Mingdao (1900–1991) and John Sung (Song Shangjie, 1901–1944) used *zui'e* to emphasise the corrupted nature of humanity and the inability of the individual to reach God without divine help. This is also the case in the Second Chinese Enlightenment when the majority of registered and unregistered churches continue to maintain fundamentalist or evangelical theologies which find a judicial image of sin as essential to the gospel.

However, type B theologians have tended to brashly attack this view of sin. As we saw in chapter three, T. C. Chao's earlier thinking described sin as *zisi* or selfishness. For Chao, this results from the human pursuit of happiness that has forgotten about God's personality of love. The result, Chao contends, is selfishness or *zisi* where one is interested only in his or her own concerns and without a care for others. This is similar to the thinking of L. C. Wu (Wu Leichuan, 1870–1944), another May Fourth, truth-oriented thinker. He writes, "That which is called 'salvation' does not speak about life after death. Rather, in this life, it is the shedding of one's sin (*zui'e*) of selfishness (*zisi*). After which, a person is able to devote oneself to the society."[2] Sin, here, is a preoccupation with one's own interests – a kind of self-love. Only when one overcomes this preoccupation can the person become a devoted member of the greater society.[3]

What we find in both T. C. Chao and L. C. Wu is a view of sin, rising from within their Confucian sensibilities that focuses on the breakdown of social relationships. Neo-Confucian (*Song Ming lixue*) scholars of the Song dynasty (960–1279) introduced into Confucianism the idea of self-centredness (*ziwo zhongxin*) as that which results from a lack in self-cultivation (*xiushen*). It is only much later that selfishness (*zisi*) makes it into Confucian writings. While both terms can be found in the writings of these May Fourth Christians, sin is more often explained as selfishness – a deliberate refusal to show concern to others. Much like their European counterparts, Chinese Enlightenment type B Christians did not regard sin in legal terms that involved the violation of a divine law and an inherited guilt or corruption. People are not born evil. Instead, individuals are fully capable of making their own altruistic choices – sin occurs when one has forsaken the society in lieu of oneself.

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[2] Wu Leichuan, *Jidujiao yu Zhongguo Wenhua* [Christianity and Chinese Culture] (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 2008 [1936]), 4. Translation mine.

[3] While I focus here on one aspect of Wu's hamartiology, Lee-ming Ng identifies three categories of sin in his thinking: (1) human suffering, (2) crimes against societal laws and (3) selfishness (*zisi*). Lee-ming Ng, "Wu Lei-chuen: From Indigenization to Revolution," *Ching Feng* 20, no. 4 (1977): 192–193.

When we turn to the type C theology of K. H. Ting, he too finds the doctrine of sin to be vitally important. However, instead of discussions on "sin" and the "sinner," Ting wants to shift the focus towards the "sinned against." Ting's view of Jesus as a Cosmic Lover is one that highlights the compassion of God for the plight of humanity. However, he speaks about the "sinned against" in order to reach out to those who have been marginalised, both theists and non-theists – particularly, those he calls "humanitarian atheists." Likewise, part of his formulation is an attack against fundamentalist Christianity and its tendency to marginalise against the non-Christian. But, how well does this hold up in the context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment? While he attempts to create a *via media* between Christians and communist, and between fundamentalists and liberals, K. H. Ting's theology is quite divisive and seen by many of the official and unofficial churches as a heretic and government stooge.

What we find is that many Christians and secular scholars of Christianity of the Second Chinese Enlightenment are increasingly interested in this hated doctrine of sin. The so-called "Cultural Christian" Liu Xiaofeng (1956–), for example describes China as a culture of joy and Christianity as a culture of sin.[4] As a culture of joy, Chinese philosophy and religion emphasises the innate self-sufficiency of the human person to achieve perfection and joy by oneself by relying on an "inner-transcendence." However, Liu Xiaofeng thinks the notion of an inner-transcendence is impossible. Unlike the Chinese culture of joy, he argues that the Christian culture of salvation is realistic about the world that has sin, evil and suffering. The Christian understanding of sin implies two ruptured relationships – between humanity and God, and between one another. The first rupture occurred through a rejection of God's will and an embrace of Satan's prompting, whereas the second rupture was brought about by selfish desire, hatred and dispute. The result of sin is moral decay and, ultimately, the loss of true life – that is, divine life. According to Liu, the idea of sin represents the limits

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[4] Liu Xiaofeng, *Zhengjiu yu Xiaoyao* [Salvation and Easy Wandering] (Shanghai: People's Publishing Company, 1988), 173-183.

of human nature and our need for a force outside of ourselves – that is, the "outer-transcendence" of God. Liu Xiaofeng sees the doctrine as an important critique against China's traditional teachings of an "inner-transcendence" which is bound by nature; instead, the existence of evil in this world shows the impossibility of such a task. Sin points to the need of an objective moral reference point that is not limited by the natural realm and one's inner-transcendence.

Another scholar in Sino-Christian Theology (*hanyu jidu shenxue*), Zhuo Xinping (1955–) has tried to mediate between the "original sin" of Christianity and the "original goodness" of Chinese philosophical and religious thought.[5] Like Liu Xiaofeng, Zhuo Xinping also describes sin in terms of broken relationships between humans with God and humans with one another. Understood in these terms, Zhuo says that the discussion on sin must shift away from human actions. Like the May Fourth critique of *zui'e*, he believes sin should not be understood as a human action or moral offence. Rather, it is better comprehended existentially as a human condition. He believes that without any spiritual dimension, it is hard for the Chinese mind to understand "sin" as an offence against God. It is because of this that Zhuo Xinping, who is not a Christian, proposes that the Chinese church should avoid using this phrase and replace it with terminology highlighting the distance between God and humanity, Heaven and earth. What he basically suggests is that any understanding of sin that emphasises the horizontal rupture in relationships is incomprehensible to the Chinese mind; instead, Chinese Christians should emphasise the rupture in the vertical, existential relationship with God. Empirically speaking, this seems contrary to recent history. Protestant Christianity is the fastest growing religion in all of China today. The vast majority of Chinese Christians maintain a fundamentalist or evangelical theological outlook. Hence, his proposal

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[5] Zhuo Xinping, 'The Concept of Original Sin in the Cultural Encounter Between East and West,' trans. Edmond Tang, in *Christianity and Modernization: A Chinese Debate*, eds. Philip L. Wickeri and Lois Cole, (Hong Kong: Daga Press, 1995), 91-100.

suggests that tens of thousands of Christians in China today are exceptions to this rule that the Chinese mind cannot conceive of sin in terms of a horizontal rupture.

When one examines the writings of scholars like Liu Xiaofeng, Zhuo Xinping, Yang Huilin (1954–),[6] Zhang Qingxiong (1950–),[7] etc., one must wonder why intellectuals, many of whom do not have faith commitments, are interested in this "outdated" teaching of sin. At least for the non-Christians in the group, it is not as though the task of clarifying this biblical concept is with the end of receiving the salvific work of Christ. Rather, much like T. C. Chao's later theology, these scholars have endured many years of hardship which have brought the doctrine of sin to the foreground. These scholars have experienced great turmoil in Chinese society through the Cultural Revolution, the 1989 military clampdown at Tiananmen Square and the growing problems accompanying the rise of a "socialist market economy" (*shehuizhuyi shichang jingji*). Yet, in China, the problem of evil is not discussed using the common Western theological category of theodicy. The main tension is not between the existence of evil and the existence of a good and omnipotent God. Instead, it is a tension between the existence of evil and the existence of a good and omnipotent humanity. It is a question of anthropodicy – that is, justifying the goodness of humanity as found in Chinese philosophy and religion.

While the doctrine of sin is undoubtedly very important in the present context, a cohesive contextual hamartiology must mediate between two poles. From one perspective, type B theologies and Ting's type C theology want to downplay human inability and highlight human potential. Not only is this informed by Western humanism, but it is even more influenced by the humanism found at the core of Chinese religiosity and across the two Chinese enlightenments. However, as can be seen in the case of T. C. Chao and the scholars

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[6] Yang Huilin, *Zui'e yu Jiushu : Jidujiao Wenhua Jingshen lun* [Sin and Atonement: The Spirit of Christian Culture] (Beijing: Dongfang Chubanshe, 1995).

[7] Zhang Qingxiong, "Sin and Evil in Christian and Confucian Perspectives," in *Christianity and Chinese Culture*, eds. Miikka Ruokanen and Paulos Huang (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 22-36.

of Sino-Christian Theology, the presence of great moral evil questions the viability of an optimistic anthropology. This is why the overt presence of societal problems has challenged this enthusiasm in human possibilities and helped to ignite a Christianity fever amongst the masses and the academics. A realistic Chinese contextual theology in the Second Chinese Enlightenment must bring together a strong understanding of both sin and the human potential.

Synergy: *Tiansheng, Rencheng*

Another idea that has subtlety existed in most contextual theologies across the two Chinese enlightenments has been the theme of synergy between heaven and humanity. Historically speaking, rationalistic understandings of causality have had difficulty penetrating the Chinese context. For example, early proponents of Chinese Buddhism, mindful of pre-existing systems of causation from their Indian antecedents, needed to translate metaphysical concepts like *hetu–phala* (cause and effect) into a Chinese context that had no similar understanding. Ultimately, the choice of translation was to use the Chinese words *yin* (origin) and *guo* (fruit). The problem was found in the absence of any mechanical view of causation like the Western "A causes B." The Chinese mindset has historically tended to be much more organic or, better, biogenerative with "*ben* (origin) producing *mo* (end)." Whalen Lai, a scholar in Chinese Buddhism, explains: "The terms [*ben–mo*] were derived from the pictograph of fertility: mother Earth or tree or wood. As the branch is to the tree trunk, *mo* (the tip) is a natural outgrowth of [*ben*] (basis): that is, the branch is an extension of the trunk. Similarly, Chinese cosmology repeatedly invokes the notion that the many are ultimately originated from, fathered by, and basically in harmony with, the One."[8] While the more mechanical model of causality often distinguishes between two entities of cause and effect,

[8] Whalen Lai, "Chinese Buddhist Causation Theories: An Analysis of the Sinitic Mahāyāna Understanding of Pratitya-samutpāda," *Philosophy East and West* 27, no. 3 (July 1977): 241.

the Chinese, biogenerative model suggests a fluid, organic continuum where one is an outgrowth of another. This is reflected in the Confucian idea of Heaven and Earth giving birth to the myriad of things and the *Dao* of Daoism as the Mother of all created things.

This is true not only in the process of creation, but also in the relationship between the will of Heaven and the will of humanity. A Chinese understanding of causality can perhaps best be understood with the aphorism: *Tiansheng, rencheng* (Heaven engenders, humanity completes) – there is a cooperation between Heaven and humanity which is initiated by Heaven. Unlike the divine monergism of the Augustinian–Reformed tradition, Chinese traditional thought places a heavy emphasis on human agency. In the case of Daoism, the individual is to passively respond to the natural flow of the world in what is known as *wuwei* (non-action). For the Confucian, it is to cultivate one's will towards the will of Heaven. This is even the case in the development of Chinese communism during May Fourth. When Marxist philosophy was first introduced, Qu Qiubai (1899–1935), a pioneer of Chinese communism, argued that it was necessary to balance the deterministic tendencies of Marxist social theory with an understanding that human effort can impact the course of history.[9] Almost foreshadowing K. H. Ting's understandings, Qu Qiubai's conclusion was that while history is deterministic, it is affected by various causes including the human collective. This tempering of Marxism points to a trend within Confucianism and Daoism – while there is freedom in the human agent, the individual is often responding to an external initiator.

When we turn to Chinese Christianity, like the Eastern church, theologians are less interested than their Western counterparts in a mechanical metaphysics of causation. Even in Chinese type A theologies, most influenced by Augustine's teachings, divine monergism is hardly found. As we have seen in chapter two, Augustinian–Reformed theologians like B. B. Warfield (1851–1921) and J. I. Packer (1926–) have accused early-Keswick thinkers as being

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[9] Nick Knight, "The Dilemma of Determinism: Qu Qiubai and the Origins of Marxist Philosophy in China," *China Information* 13, no. 4 (1999): 1–26.

thoroughly Pelagian and emphasising a humanistic monergism. Yet, Watchman Nee relies on this same Keswick tradition to base his theology. In contrast with Augustinian–Reformed views of divine monergism and early-Keswick views of humanistic monergism, Watchman Nee teaches a synergy of divine and human wills where the average Christian must actively choose to receive God's holiness before he or she can live a normal Christian life.

This is likewise the case with the self-proclaimed fundamentalist Wang Mingdao. Wang believes the result of sin was not primarily alienation from God but death in the body; salvation was therefore partly to address the problems of the body by the addition or incorporation of a "new person" with the old.[10] Like Watchman Nee, Wang Mingdao emphasises the need for repentance and the importance of human effort in holy living.[11] Neither of these Christian leaders hold any form of divine monergism, an idea quite foreign to the Chinese context. But they also do not hold any form of humanistic monergism as well. While monergistic understandings of causation are prevalent in conservative, theological debates in the West, it is completely foreign in conservative theological debates of China. Hence, what we see in both type A theologies is that salvation is at once the extension of God's grace and the free response of the human agent.

Within type B theologies, there is a tendency to give greater primacy to the human will, almost at the risk of losing any divine agency altogether. As discussed in chapter three, T. C. Chao's earlier theology describes Jesus as the son of God not because of any divine qualities, but because he most perfectly exhibited the love of God. Additionally, Confucius (Kongzi, 551–479 BC), Mozi (c. 470–c. 391 BC) and other ancient sages are sons of God and serve as moral exemplars for the rest of humanity. Hence, we too are able to attain to the status of a son or daughter of God by expressing God's love. This is not to say Chao's

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[10] Lee-ming Ng, "Christianity and Social Change: The Case in China, 1920–1950" (ThD thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1970), 66.

[11] Ibid, 74–75.

theology fell into a type of meritorious monergism as espoused by Pelagius. Rather, God has imparted his personality upon humans, a kind of *imago Dei*, which enables the individual to seek after God and work cooperatively for the self-realisation and perfection of one's own personality. When Chao's theology shifted after his imprisonment in the 1940s, he would place a greater emphasis on God's initiative. But this is not to say he now rejected the notion of human free will. Rather, at several points Chao petitioned for God to give him clarity of his life mission. Like the type A thinkers, Chao simply wanted to complete the will engendered by God.

When we look at the final type C theology, represented by K. H. Ting, we see once again the importance of a cooperation between humans and God. The deity of the "Galilean vision" is not a divine Caesar, ruthless moralist or unmoved mover, but a God of love. By virtue of his relationship with the world, the Cosmic Lover influences and persuades humans to love without limiting our freedom. Moreover, we find this also within his understanding of creation and redemption. Taking a cue from the theology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955), Ting believes that God is sanctifying all of humanity, bringing it towards perfection as co-creators with God. Through Christ, God has imparted a grace common to both Christians and non-Christians alike, empowering all to participate in the work of God. But this is not simply the work of individuals alone, but also of the greater society. Similar to the thinking of Qu Qiubai mentioned earlier, Ting saw the human collectives as being vehicles of God's grace that affect the determinism of this world.

As mentioned in chapter one, since the 1990s, there has also been the development of unregistered churches in areas like Beijing and Shanghai amongst the urban elite, many of whom include academics interested in Sino-Christian Theology. In a phenomenon that some have called the "Third Church" (as opposed to the TSPM or conventional house churches),

many have begun to embrace a Calvinistic theology.[12] While the main impetus for looking to the Reformed tradition seems to be the need for a stronger ecclesiology and to engage in a public theology, whether this will result in a more nuanced monergistic Chinese theology, only time will tell.

What can be said, however, is that what has arisen within the vast majority of Chinese theologies is an emphasis on a synergistic cooperation between God and humans. But where did it come from? Firstly, this can be seen in the theological resources the Chinese Christians relied upon. As has been discussed, Watchman Nee develops much of his thinking from the somewhat "Pelagian" Keswick theology. Yet Nee does not profess any Pelagian meritorious monergism, but almost compensates for this tendency by upholding a synergistic relationship between God and humanity. But there are also those who have had much more Anglo-Catholic intellectual developments and may have been influenced by Thomistic understanding of free will and efficacious grace. In particular, this includes K. H. Ting who was trained at the prestigious Anglican institution of St. John's University in Shanghai and was later ordained a priest and a bishop. Additionally, Ting came from a strong Anglican upbringing with his maternal grandfather being one of the first clergymen of the Chinese Anglican Church (*Zhonghua Sheng Gong Hui*). But the Anglo-Catholic influences includes T. C. Chao – who was a Methodist trained at the Methodist institutions Dongwu University in Suzhou and Vanderbuilt University in Tennessee and, in 1941, was ordained an Anglican priest. Hence, all three of the representatives we have focused on in this study have had Christian influences with tendencies that emphasise either a divine–human synergism or a humanistic monergism.

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[12] Sun Ming Yee, "Urban House church in China," *Behold*, no. 26 (2007), available from http://www.oc.org/web/modules/smartsection/item.php? itemid=3175, accessed on 15 April 2011. Andrew Brown, "Chinese Calvinism Flourishes," *The Guardian*, 27 May 2009, available from http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/andrewbrown/2009/may/27/china-calvin-christianity, accessed on 15 April 2011.

But secondly, these Chinese thinkers are not exclusively influenced by their Christian antecedents. As discussed in chapter two, while Keswick writers like Steven Barabas insist on the importance of the human agent to begin the work of sanctification, Watchman Nee reverses the formula by arguing for divine initiative. In contrast, while Thomistic metaphysics may have been influential in K. H. Ting and T. C. Chao, their systems of thought are less focused on God as first mover as it is that he is first lover – humans are to love like the God of love. Their metaphysics of causation are not mechanical (first mover), but biogenerative (first lover). Hence, in addition to the resources within Christianity, these Christians relied on something else. They struggled with a crisis of identity: can one be both "Christian" and "Chinese"? As opposed to the mechanical Augustinian–Reformed approach, Chinese Christians have gravitated towards a metaphysics of causation which is much more biogenerative and emphasises the balance of wills between Heaven and humanity. Hence, in contrast with Western Christianity, divine monergism seems to be completely inconceivable in the Chinese context; instead, preference is given to theologies that esteem a synergism of divine and human wills. Like the Chinese religious impulse, Chinese Christians prefer to articulate a much more organic understanding of causation where God (or Heaven) engenders and humanity completes.

Union: *Tian Ren Heyi*

This synergistic activity is closely related to the Chinese religious ethos that searches for a unity between Heaven and humanity (*Tian ren heyi*). Seeing the Latin term *religio* as the bond between the human and the divine, Julia Ching (Qin Jiayi, 1934–2001) writes,

> [*Tian ren heyi*] arose out of a primeval experience: that of the human being possessed by the spirit or spirits, in a moment of trance. We could call this a kind of shamanic experience, and we shall be speaking much more about the shamanic aspect of ancient religion, as well as the surviving importance of ecstasy and of theistic beliefs in today's popular religion. This maxim was to become better known in the later traditions, such as in Confucian and Taoist philosophies, to represent less a union between the divine and the human, and more a

> continuum or a communication between the two orders, moving more and more away from the originally anthropomorphic, to an increasingly pantheistic sense.[13]

Though the phrase has shamanistic origins, *Tian ren heyi* has since found its way into most Chinese religions. It has also shifted from a more anthropomorphic (involving trances and ecstasy) to become much more pantheistic that, unlike many Christian formulations, blurs the divide between divine and human realms. Within the Chinese teachings, we see how *Tian ren heyi* speaks about the need for humans to follow the human way (*rendao*) and seek to correspond with the way of Heaven (*Tiandao*). There were some, like the Confucian Xunzi (c. 310–237 BC), who believe "one who understands the distinctive functions of Heaven and man may be called a perfect man." [14] So while there is a desire for cooperation of wills between Heaven and humanity, and a harmonious unity between the two orders, it is often also recognised that the two are of very different domains and, at times, in opposition with one another.

Tian ren heyi has been reappropriated in the Second Chinese Enlightenment by the important Marxist thinker Li Zehou (1930–).[15] Within the quest to modernise China, Li Zehou sought to reverse the ancient methodology of *zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong* (Chinese learning for essence, Western learning for application) or, as abbreviation, *zhongti xiyong* (Chinese essence, Western application) by famously arguing for *xiti zhongyong* (Western essence, Chinese application). For Li, much like T. C. Chao in his sinicisation of Christianity as we saw in chapter three, *xiti zhongyong* becomes the methodological framework whereby Marxism and other modern Western philosophical theories from enlightenment thinkers like Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)

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[13] Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 5.

[14] *Xunzi* 17, translated in Wing-tsit Chan, ed., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1963), 117.

[15] Jing Wang, *High Culture Fever: Politics, Aesthetics, and Ideology in Deng's China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 93–117. Min Lin and Maria Galikowski, *The Search for Modernity: Chinese Intellectuals and Cultural Discourse in the Post-Mao Era* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 39–69.

should be sinicised and become more useful in post-Mao China. In one instance, Li Zehou attempts to marry the Marxist concept of humanisation of nature (the view that science and technology is the basis whereby humanity could increasingly dominate nature) with the Chinese concept of *Tian ren heyi*. In his belief, Chinese traditional though lacks a view of the transcendent as found in religions such as Christianity. *Tian ren heyi*, instead, provides an aesthetic appreciation of Heaven and nature as a substitute for the transcendent. Hence, in order to combat the excesses and the abuses of modernity, a Chinese humanisation of nature should not focus on merely plundering a dispensable nature, but also possessing a view of nature or Heaven as possessing inherent beauty worthy of appreciation.

This tendency of *Tian ren heyi* being understood in terms of natural or social harmony, rather than speaking of a transcendent reality, leads some individuals like Liu Xiaofeng to regard the concept as pure nonsense.[16] There is an emphasis within Christianity of the holiness of God and the lowliness of humanity. This is a separation that can hardly be breached. In Liu's assessment, there is no transcendent or "outside-of-man" meaning in *Tian*. Rather, Chinese cosmology has but one world – *this* world. How can there be unity between Heaven and humanity if the two realms they represent are actually one? Yet not all Chinese thinkers agree with Liu on this point. One example of this is the New Confucian Feng Youlan (1895–1990). Writing decades before Liu Xiaofeng, Feng Youlan claims that there are four spheres of living within Chinese philosophical thought: the innocent/natural (*jiran*), the utilitarian (*gongli*), the moral (*daode*) and the transcendent (*tiandi*).[17] While the first three spheres are based on thisworldly societal relationships, Feng argues that there is also a transcendent sphere that is beyond any worldly society which we must pursue. Likewise, Mengzi (c. 372–c. 289 BC) writes that we are not merely members of the social organisation,

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[16] Frederik Fällman, "Salvation and Modernity: Intellectuals and Faith in Contemporary China," (PhD thesis, Stockholm University, 2004), 90–91.

[17] Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy: A Systematic Account of Chinese Thought From its Origins to the Present Day* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1948), 338–340.

but we are also citizens of Heaven.[18] The Chinese sage must be concerned with both this world and the world beyond.

When we turn to the theologians of this present study, we find that the Chinese thinkers also have a strong emphasis on union with God. As we have seen in chapter two, Watchman Nee's type A soteriology emphasises two facets: a cutting off of one's self and a uniting of the Christian's will with the will of God.[19] In Nee's view, one who is fully united with the will of God would cease from every activity that emerges from the self; this person is dead to the self and alive in Christ. This idea is developed much further in the thoughts of Witness Lee, a successor of Watchman Nee. In one text, Lee echoes Athanasius' "blessed inversion" when he writes, "This is the story of God in His acting to rescue man, to become mans' redemption, and to become mans' clothing, man's covering, man's righteousness, so that man can be in God to become one with God." [20] In the perspective of Witness Lee, only when a Christian is united with God can he or she receive a "full salvation" of the spirit, soul and body.[21] What we see in these type A theologies is a kind of "Christian perfectionism" where salvation is complete in this world only when the Christian is united with God.

For K. H. Ting, his theology takes a vastly different approach from Watchman Nee or Witness Lee. Yet, despite the differences, Ting also has a theme of the oneness of God and humans in his Cosmic Christ. In the perspective of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Christ is the Omega Point and the eschatological goal. As the church continues to show God's love and humankind continues to get a glimpse of what is to come, then all of humanity (and creation) will join in perfect union with the Omega Point. In process theology, while God is primordially one and the world is primordially multiple, both God and the world move

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[18] Ibid, 77. *Mengzi* 6A:16, 7A:19.

[19] Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man* (New York, NY: Christian Fellowship Publishers, [1928] 1977), 3.81–84.

[20] Witness Lee, *The History of God in His Union with Man* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1993), 58.

[21] Witness Lee, *The Vision of the Lord's Recovery* (Anaheim, CA: Living Stream Ministry, 1985), 29–31.

conversely towards one another, until, ultimately, the world becomes one and God becomes multiple. God, here, is neither apart from the world nor, like in pantheism, completely blurred with the world – He is "panentheistic." Hence Ting, developing his eschatological framework on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and the process theologians, plots a trajectory where all of humanity ultimately finds union with the Omega Point, the Cosmic Christ.

When we turn to the type B theology of T. C. Chao, it is important to recognise the theologian's apprehension with the theme of union with Heaven in Chinese thought. In his assessment, the Chinese orientation tends to dismiss a person's individuality. However, the May Fourth Enlightenment, much like the French Enlightenment, has fought to reclaim the importance of the individual. No longer does one need to find his or her value or status from the monarch or any other feudal authority. The value of the individual gives the basis for May Fourth ideals of human freedom and democracy. So, Chao's apprehension with the Chinese orientation of *Tian ren heyi* is explicitly because the individual no longer has value in and of him or herself; our dignity only comes when we are one, ontologically, with Heaven.

In contrast, T. C. Chao believes Christianity overcomes the pantheistic tendencies of Chinese thought by upholding the dignity and value of the individual. Christianity speaks of the role the individual plays with his or her greater community and, ultimately, in the global society. This is a critical distinction. It must also be remembered that T. C. Chao believed Christianity's ultimate goal is found in the uniting one's consciousness with the consciousness of God in order to achieve a universal, homogenous consciousness. Hence despite his desire to separate himself from actively blurring the unique natures of Heaven and humans, he provides an almost contradictory merging of personalities. I say almost because there is a telling difference. Chao does not have a problem with the union of activities (namely, expressing the universal love of God), but finds the union of being or essence troublesome. Perhaps even more than with Watchman Nee or K. H. Ting, Chao articulates a nuanced view of *Tian ren heyi* that is also found in Eastern Orthodox *theosis* where humans are able to

participate in the divine energies (or activities), while not being able to be united with the divine essence.

MOVING FORWARD

One of the main tasks of this chapter was to provide an analysis of the history of Chinese indigenous theology against the context it has arisen from. Time and time again, Chinese Christians have relied on theology from Western or Latin Christianity as a basis for their convictions and methodologies. This has also led to a predominance of theologies of types A and B. Additionally, many of the debates from the West surrounding questions of orthodoxy or modernity (e.g., the fundamentalist–modernist debate) have also been imported into China. However, there has also arisen in China issues and concerns that are framed in ways much different from their foreign counterparts. For example, in China, there is rarely the discussion of divine monergism or inherited guilt. But there are discussions around the optimism of human potential, the synergistic cooperation between God and humanity, and an ultimate reality found in union with the divine. What this has shown is that, despite its Western antecedents, these theological concerns are framed in a manner quite different in the Chinese context. While these contextual theologies have arisen as a result of the socio-political context of the two Chinese enlightenments, it has also come about due to the underlying religio-philosophical context that China has known for over two millennia.

As we move onto the next chapter, we will see how these three themes exist within Eastern Orthodox theology. In so doing, it will help to recognise that while the basis of a Chinese Protestant theology may be from Latin Christianity, the product shares many similarities with Greek Christianity – a long history of Christianity which Chinese Christians have hardly interacted with. Yet this is largely due to the religio-philosophical basis of

Chinese Christianity that echoes many comparable themes of Byzantine Christianity. But is there more to it than similarities? Can it be profitable for the Second Chinese Enlightenment?

6. *THEOSIS* AND CHINA: PART II

The contextualisation of theology is the attempt to understand the Christian faith in a particular context. Often, the major theological questions posed originate from the socio-political concerns of the day or of a particular demographic of society. Yet these questions have also been at times nuanced by the religious and philosophical heritage of the context as well. As we have seen in the chapters two, three and four, all Chinese Christian thinkers in the last hundred years have in varying degrees needed to wrestle with these two poles: on one end, the socio-political; on the other, the religio-philosophical. Though the latter was seen by many revolutionaries of the May Fourth Enlightenment as a remnant of feudalism's past, the Second Chinese Enlightenment has brought upon a *zongjiao re* (religious fever) where religion is now at the forefront of intellectual discourse. Not only has this resulted in a growing interest in "foreign religions" like Protestantism and Catholicism, there has also been a revival of China's institutional *sanjiao* (the three great teachings of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism) and diffused religions, as seen in its many folk religions and practices such as ancestral worship.

In this chapter, we shall look to address the two poles of contextual theology. First, we shall explore the themes as introduced in the last chapter (i.e., sin, synergy and union) from an Eastern Orthodox perspective. In particular, we will focus on a type C theological anthropology that forms the basis of the Orthodox view of *theosis* in the context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment. Then, at the end of this chapter, we shall look at how Eastern Christianity can and has played an important role in dealing with pertinent enlightenment questions of modernity and nation-building.

THEOSIS AND THE *ZONGJIAO RE*

As we have argued thus far, Chinese Christians of the two enlightenments have tended to articulate their theology from a basis in Western Christianity and, consequently, types A and B that find dominance in the Latin teachings. Why have these Chinese Christians focused on Western Christianity? Part of the reason may be due to a desire to navigate one's theology between the seemingly antithetical positions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. In order to preserve the Christian identity, these theologies have placed a priority on maintaining a cohesiveness with certain aspects of the multifaceted Christian tradition.[1] Developmentally, this may be due to the overt Western legacy of missionary and foreign education that many of these Chinese thinkers were influenced by. However, their formulations have largely resembled the impulses of both Chinese thinking and, implicitly, Eastern Orthodoxy. Can Byzantine provide a complementary or supplementary theology useful for the Chinese religio-philosophical context?

Sin: Original or Ancestral

Eastern Orthodoxy

There is perhaps no place better to begin understanding the Orthodox view of *theosis* than in the creation of humanity. In Genesis 1:26-27, it is written that God creates humanity in the divine image and likeness. Protestant interpreters like Luther and Calvin have tended to see the "image" and "likeness" as referring to a single idea, expressed in a form of Hebrew parallelism common in the Old Testament.[2] Both Reformers believe that after the Fall, the image of God remains in humans only as a relic of God's intention for his creation. However, prior to the Protestant Reformation, many of the church fathers (especially in the East)

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[1] This is actually one of Schreiter's criteria for evaluating the performance of a local theology. Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1985), 118.

[2] Martin Luther, *LW* 1:60–65. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.15.3.

describe the "image" and "likeness" as two distinct aspects of human nature. For example, in *Against Heresies* 5.6.1 and 5.16.2, Irenaeus writes that the divine image gave humans the ability to reason and make free choices while the divine likeness was a supernatural endowment of the Holy Spirit. After the Fall, while the divine image was affected, it still remains intact in postlapsarian humans but has subsequently become enslaved by the Devil; humanity, however, has lost the divine likeness.[3] While it would be anachronistic to speak of "original sin" in this context, free will was important to Irenaeus in his combat against the rigid determinism of Gnosticism. Hence, the early apologist claims that postlapsarian humanity continues to bear the image of God and, therefore, the ability to freely choose to sin or not to sin and be held accountable for it.[4] It is only in Christ's recapitulation that humanity would be returned to its original state.

Eastern Orthodoxy tends to follow Irenaeus and emphasise this distinction between the image (or in Greek, εἰκών – often translated as "icon") and likeness of God as a critical anthropological foundation of their theology.[5] John of Damascus (676–749), known for defending the use of holy icons, writes in his summa of Orthodox theology, "For the phrase 'after His image' clearly refers to the side of his nature which consists of mind and free will, whereas 'after His likeness' means likeness in virtue so far as that is possible."[6] John also argues that God's creation of humans in his own image is a justification for honouring icons of Christ, Mary and the saints.[7] The central argument to the Mosaic prohibition of graven images was the blasphemous nature of sacrifice to demons. Hence the Old Testament has no

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[3] J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1978), 171. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.18.1.

[4] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 1:282–283.

[5] Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976), 114–134. Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, new ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 219–221. Gösta Hallonsten, "*Theosis* in Recent Research: A Renewal of Interest and a Need for Clarity," in *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions*, eds., Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 285.

[6] John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 2.12, *NPNF2* 9:31.

[7] John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 4.16.

problem with the use of Cherubim and other icons of worship in the temple. John of Damascus believes it is crucial to understand that the honour offered to icons is passed onto the prototype – the perfect Image of God, Jesus incarnate. While only actual worship is directed towards God, veneration or reverence can be offered to holy images since they permeate God's spiritual energies. Connecting this back to humans as bearers of God's image (or icon), "Orthodox religious thought lays the utmost emphasis on the image of God in the human person. Each of us is a 'living theology', and because we are God's icon, we can find God by looking within our own heart, by 'returning within ourselves'…." [8] Postlapsarian humans possess the icon or image of God and, hence, are able to be permeated by the divine energies and point others and oneself to God.

Maximus the Confessor (580–662), considered by many as the father of Byzantine theology, discusses the image and likeness of God in terms of divine attributes communicated to and preserved in humans: being, eternal being, goodness and wisdom. He writes:

> The first two of these [God] grants to the essence [of humanity], the second two to its faculty of will; that is, to the essence he gives being and eternal being, and to the volitive faculty he gives goodness and wisdom in order that what [God] is by essence the creature might become by participation.… The first is by nature, the second by grace. Every rational nature indeed is made to the image of God; but only those who are good and wise are made to his likeness.[9]

In his image, God imparts on humans the essence of their existence. In his likeness, God shares with humanity the goals of their existence. Through his divine goodness and wisdom, God's act of creation aspired to see humanity freely move from "being" to "well-being" to the eschatological "eternal-well-being" – that is, eternal participation in God.[10] Maximus here is sharply responding to Origenism which taught that spiritual beings originally enjoyed rest (στάσις), experienced a fall (κίνησις) resulting in corporeal creation (γένεσις).[11] The

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[8] Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 220.

[9] Maximus the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Chapters on Love* 3.25, translated in George C. Berthold, ed., *Maximus Confessor: Selected Writings* (London: SPCK, 1985), 64.

[10] Maximus the Confessor, *The Four Hundred Chapters of Love* 3.24. Melchisedec Törönen, *Union and Distinction in the Thought of St. Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 27.

[11] John Boojamra, "Original Sin According to St. Maximus the Confessor," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 20, no. 1–2 (1976): 19–20.

Confessor effectively reverses the formula by identifying creation as a gift of God that moves towards eternal-well-being in resting in God. Humans were created immature and with a goal for perfection and deification. Hence, human freedom is afforded because the λόγος or essence of human nature takes after the free nature of the divine Logos [12] and has the ability to move towards eternal rest in God.

In the garden of Eden, humans did not have to wrestle over the choice of embracing God's virtues. Much like Irenaeus and John of Damascus, Maximus the Confessor believes that the likeness of God was lost after the Fall. While the image of God cannot be defaced (as in Luther or Calvin) or destroyed, the likeness can and is increasingly destroyed by sin. The movement now is not only from "being" to "well-being" to "eternal-well-being," but may lead from "being" to "ill-being" and "eternal-ill-being" – the inability to participate in God's love and grace.[13] Through the Fall, humans now have two competing wills in them: a natural will from their λόγος that leads a person towards God and a deliberative or gnomic will that moves distinct from their λόγος. Like Watchman Nee's understanding of the human will after the Fall, the gnomic will is enticed by the lusts of this world and moves away from its original design. As Maximus suggests in the above quotation, it is by grace through a spiritual process that humans can, through deification, regain the likeness of God. Eastern Christians maintain that part of human nature is a self-determination to make moral choices, allowing a person to move towards either the likeness or the unlikeness of God. As the Cappadocian father Gregory of Nyssa (335–394) is said to have written, "I am according to the image by my reason; I become according to the likeness by making myself a Christian." [14]

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[12] Maximus sees a distinction between the λόγος of Christ and the λόγος of created beings. In order to keep this clear, I will use the Greek form "λόγος" or its plural "λόγοι" in the sense of creation while I will use the English rendering "Logos" to speak of Christ.

[13] Töröne, 27. Torstein T. Tollefsen, *The Christocentric Cosmology of St Maximus the Confessor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 173.

[14] Gregory of Nyssa, *Oration* 1.2, quoted in Berthold, *Maximus Confessor*, 94–95.

Here we see a theme in type C, Orthodox theology: the goal of the Christian life is to be assimilated with God.

When dealing with the Fall, Eastern Orthodox commentators are quick to clarify that "original sin" was an invention of Augustine and, prior to him, Greek and Latin fathers tended to speak about what some have termed "ancestral sin."[15] In prelapsarian humanity, the fathers tend to agree that Adam and Eve's free will allowed them to commit that first sin. However, ancestral sin holds that Adam alone must be held guilty of that sin and that postlapsarian humanity shares in the punishment which, in contrast with Augustine, is primarily death. Writing about the thoughts of the Archbishop of Thessaloniki Gregory Palamas (1296–1359), John Meyendorff comments, "It is basically by heredity that the corruption has been transmitted to the whole human race. According to Palamas, it was to deliver us from hereditary mortality that the Son of God was made flesh, and not because of the sin of Adam; where a Westerner would have said *felix Adae culpa* (fortunate sin of Adam), Gregory proclaimed *felix mors* (fortunate death)."[16] The fundamental error in the Western view following Augustine, so Orthodox writers claim, is in the inheritance of Adam's guilt since a person can only be held responsible for a sin he or she has committed. The inheritance of guilt is erroneous.

How is it that the bishop of Hippo could make such a mistake? The answer: a bad translation of the Bible. One of the main texts Augustine used to debate with Pelagius was Romans 5:12 which, in the Latin translation he used, ended with the words "in quo omnes peccaverunt" – that is, "in whom [i.e., Adam] all sinned." Hence, Augustine's understanding of Paul was that death spread to all humans because, through Adam's sin, all sinned.

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[15] Perhaps the most exhaustive study on the subject can be found in John Romanides' 1957 doctoral thesis, later translated and published in English. This monograph's usefulness in the current study, however, is a bit limited due to his particular focus on writings of the second and third centuries. John S. Romanides, *The Ancestral Sin*, trans. George S. Gabriel (Ridgewood, NJ: Zephyr Publishing, 1998).

[16] John Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 2nd ed., trans. George Lawrence (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 125.

However, the Greek ending of the verse reads "ἐφ᾽ ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον," which simply conveys that death is the punishment for all who sin. But what does humanity share with the first humans? Western scholarship has focused on the relationship between Adam and the sins of humanity.[17] Following after Augustine's interpretation, Protestants in the traditions of Calvin or Luther have tended to uphold the position that this implied an inherited guilt.[18] J. I. Packer states it quite clearly, "The assertion of original sin makes the point that we are not sinners because we sin, but rather we sin because we are sinners, born with a nature enslaved to sin."[19] Hence, the doctrine of original sin teaches that we are sinners because of the inherent natures we were born with.

However, Eastern scholarship has tended towards a very different understanding of the Greek text. John Chrysostom (349–407), for example, famously wrote in his commentary on Romans 5:12, "But what means, 'for that all have sinned?' This; [Adam] having once fallen, even they that had not eaten of the tree did from him, all of them, become mortal."[20] Humanity shares in Adam's mortality. This comes from the understanding in Romans 5:12 of "ἐφ᾽ ᾧ": "[I]f it means 'because,' [it] is a neuter pronoun; but it can also be masculine, referring to the immediately preceding substantive *thanatos* ('death')."[21] Instead of Augustine's view that all die because all have sinned through Adam, John Chrysostom and other Eastern interpreters hold that all sin because all are mortal. This can perhaps best be illustrated in the table below:

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[17] James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, vol. 38A, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 273–274, 290. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, vol. 33, *The Anchor Bible*, (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 415–417.

[18] John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), 111–112. Martin Luther, *LW* 25:259–260.

[19] J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 83.

[20] John Chrysostom, *Homily* 10, *NPNF1* 11:84.

[21] John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, rev. 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1983), 144. Cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 342–343.

Original Sin	Ancestral Sin
1. Out of his own free will, Adam sinned and received the guilt (as a sinner) and the punishment (in death) of that sin. 2. Adam's guilt is inherited by all of Adam's descendants through concupiscence. 3. All are guilty (sinners), therefore all deserve the punishment of sin (death).	1. Out of his own free will, Adam sinned and received the guilt (as a sinner) and the punishment (in death) of that sin. 2. Adam's punishment is shared in solidarity by all of the human race. 3. All are mortal (that is, will die), therefore all will consequently sin.

The consensus within the Eastern tradition is that humanity inherited from Adam death and corruption – not culpability. From this basis, we can appreciate why, despite the fact that Eve sinned first, Adam is held responsible. For Adam is the federal head of the human race. His mortality is translated to all of humanity – but not his sin or guilt.

Moreover, from the Eastern perspective, death makes individual sins inevitable.[22] Because of our mortality, we are in a constant pursuit to quench our bodily needs. Hence we steal and kill and slander because doing so may increase the likelihood of our temporary survival. If we were immortal, we would not desire or need these things. But we are now mortal. According to Maximus the Confessor, the Devil persuaded Adam to take pleasure in the sensual offerings of this world rather than the spiritual offerings of God.[23] However, this does not means humanity has since inherited the guilt of Adam. Rather, like Adam and Eve, each individual is now corrupted, possessing a gnomic will that seeks the passions of our mortal bodies against the natural will that leads to God. As one commentator states about Maximus, "[S]in and guilt in the Maximian system are due to the gnome (γνώμη), which is a hypostatic, rather than essential, quality. What mankind has inherited from Adam is the

[22] See also, Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 2:182.

[23] Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor*, 2nd. ed. (Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1995), 154–156.

subjugation to death and corruption, and not culpability."[24] If they are not essential qualities of human nature, then the rejection of sin and guilt does not mean the rejection of the individual self – the basis of many enlightenment ideals like freedom and democracy. Moreover, the consequence of the Fall in us is our mortality – not the inheritance of guilt common to type A, law-oriented theologies. Therefore, the solution to our solidarity in the death of the first Adam is the solidarity we are afforded in the life of the second Adam. The atonement is less about liberation from sin (though it is included) as it is about liberation from mortality and being recreated in the image and likeness of God. As is quoted by the Apostle Paul:

> "Death has been swallowed up in victory."
> "Where, O death, is your victory?
> Where, O death, is your sting?"
> 1 Corinthians 15:54-55, NRSV

Relevance for the Zongjiao Re

From what has been discussed so far, one can see many ideas applicable to the Chinese context. First is the shift away from hereditary guilt. Like L. C. Wu and T. C. Chao of the first Chinese Enlightenment, the notion of being held accountable for someone else's sin is erroneous to Orthodox Christians. For the Chinese type B theologians, they preferred to understand sin in terms of selfishness or *zisi* – an intellectual failure to recognise the God of love, rather than an inherent evil trait. Likewise, Eastern Orthodox writings discussing Augustine's "original sin" are often discussed as the mistaken idea of "original guilt" – people can only be held guilty for sins committed themselves. Moreover, like *zisi*, individual sins are seen as a selfish approach to addressing our mortality. We sin because we want the sensual pleasures to quench our sensual desires. As Zhuo Xinping critiqued, the Orthodox view of sin puts less emphasis on our moral bankruptcy and refocuses on our existential potential. The

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[24] Boojamra, 27. See Jean-Claude Larchet, "Ancestral Guilt According to St. Maximus the Confessor: A Bridge Between Eastern and Western Conceptions," *Sobornost* 20, no. 1 (1998): 26–48.

remedy for that has already been provided by Christ. Hence, through our deification (or self-cultivation), we move away from sin and towards the divine likeness that was first intended of us.

Another valuable contribution is the way Eastern Orthodoxy finds resonance in Chinese teachings that speak of a seed of potential found in human nature. While Chinese philosophies and religions all have divergent approaches to human realisation, Tu Wei-ming points out that adherents of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism all share a common belief: "Although existentially human beings are not what they ought to be, they can be perfected through self-cultivation; and the reason that they can become fully realized is inherent in what they are. Therefore, the human condition here and now, rather than either the original position in the past or a utopian projection into the future, is the central concern."[25] In Chinese Buddhism, for example, adherents of the Mahāyāna or "Great Vehicle" hold that all sentient creatures possess the buddha-nature (*foxing*) and have the potential of attaining enlightenment (*puti*).[26] Salvation is therefore offered to all and the Buddhist enlightenment is achieved through devotion to the Buddha and love for humanity. These Chinese Buddhist ideas would be further developed in the Neo-Confucianism (*Song Ming lixue*) of the Song (960–1279) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties as well as in the more recent New Confucianism (*xin rujia / xin ruxue*), especially in the thoughts of Mou Zongsan (1909–1995).[27]

Likewise in one of the earliest forms of Confucianism, Mengzi asserts that all humans are fundamentally good and endowed with a moral sense that enables all to become a sage.[28] Every individual has four inherent, moral understandings: commiseration, shame and dislike,

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[25] Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1985), 25.

[26] Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964), 12–14.

[27] Umberto Bresciani, *Reinventing Confucianism: the New Confucian Movement* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies, 2001), 370–388. Jason T. Clower, *The Unlikely Buddhologist: Tiantai Buddhism in Mou Zongsan's New Confucianism* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

[28] *Mengzi* 2A:6.

deference and compliance, and right and wrong. While environmental elements may affect one's development, this moral sense cannot be lost. This is likewise true of Xunzi (c. 310–237 BC), an important Confucian opponent of Mengzi, who believes that humanity has a tendency towards chaos and destruction.[29] However, despite this negative disposition, Xunzi insists that individuals can be transformed by social and moral education, enforced by laws and guided by moral code in order to become a good and morally beautiful person. So, while Eastern Orthodoxy shares with the Chinese teachings an optimism in the possibilities of human nature, the Christian school of thought distinguishes itself from the Chinese teachings in that humanity's potential is conditioned by divine help, especially after the Fall.

Eastern Christians hold a tension between the optimism of attaining God's likeness with the realism of evil tendencies found in postlapsarian humans. In the last chapter, I mentioned how the later theology of T. C. Chao and the writings of many scholars in Sino-Christian Theology appreciated the Western doctrine of sin because it provided ready answers to the problem of evil. However, Western formulations of theodicy are foreign to the Chinese context because the tension is not between the existence of evil and an omnipotent God, but it is with an omnipotent humanity. While the Orthodox position of "ancestral sin" does not have the same concept of inherited guilt as the Augustinian tradition, it agrees with the Western doctrine's understanding of a crippled humanity. Hence, like the hamartiology of T. C. Chao and Liu Xiaofeng, ancestral sin points to the need for God's help. We cannot rely on our "inner-transcendence" because we are limited by our mortality. Only by seeking Christ and depending on his divine grace can we hope to aspire towards deification, beyond the physical realm, and seek perfection in our moral lives.

This leads to our final emphasis of Eastern Orthodoxy on death as the source of the problems in this world. While this is not a major theme discussed by Chinese thinkers with

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[29] Antonio S. Cua, "Dimensions of *Li* (Propriety): Reflections on an Aspect of Hsün Tzu's Ethics," *Philosophy East and West* 29, no. 4 (Oct. 1979): 381.

the exception of perhaps Wang Mingdao, it has traditionally been a major concern underlying Chinese popular religions. On the one hand, you have the case of ancestral worship and the need to continually care for those "living" in the netherworld.[30] On the other hand, you have the development of religious Daoism during the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) which has much interest in self-cultivation techniques to increase the longevity of one's life and, ultimately for one to reach immortality.[31] While many of these thoughts were considered superstitious and gave way to a thisworldly emphasis of the May Fourth Enlightenment, the Second Chinese Enlightenment has seen the revival in Chinese folk religions and longevity techniques integrated into things like *qigong* exercises, meditation techniques and Chinese medicine. Even in the growth of Christianity in China, some surveys record that 90% of new believers cited supernatural healing as a reason for their conversion.[32] The contribution Eastern Orthodoxy makes is in its claim that the main problem to be solved is not merely a matter of retribution – rather, it is death. John Meyendorff writes, "Even in death the Christian remains a member of the living and resurrected Body of Christ, into which he has been incorporated through baptism and the Eucharist. Through the funeral service, the Church gathers to bear witness to this fact… but already experienced by every Christian who possesses the awesome privilege of living, by anticipation, in the future Kingdom."[33] Hence, in the midst of great suffering, like many Chinese today, Eastern Christians find solace in the existential hope of life after this mortal life.

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[30] Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 15–32.

[31] Livia Kohn, *Daoism and Chinese Culture* (Magdalena, NM: Three Pines Press, 2001), 43–58.

[32] Edmond Tang, "'Yellers' and Healers – Pentecostalism and the Study of Grassroots Christianity in China," *China Study Journal* 17, no. 3 (December 2002): 27.

[33] Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 199.

Synergy: Cooperation of Human and Divine Wills

Eastern Orthodoxy

"A man's free-will," Augustine writes about postlapsarian humanity, "avails for nothing except to sin."[34] Before the Fall, humans had the power both to sin and to not sin (*posse non peccare et posse peccare*); however, due to the disobedience of Adam, all humans are subjected to the inevitability of sin (*non posse non peccare*). Only through rebirth and, ultimately, in glorification is the human able to not sin. Ever since this articulation, debates around free will and determinism have found prominence in Western Christianity. Augustine's teachings were affirmed in the Second Synod of Orange (529), and brought to new life in Protestant debates amongst Lutherans, (Hyper-)Calvinists, Arminians and Wesleyans. Hence, Protestant "orthodoxy" has tended to uphold the notion of divine monergism along hard determinist or compatibilist lines.

According to Augustine, Christians did not previously have a need to clarify the nature of sin or free will; it was not until the Pelagian controversy that the occasion arose where free will and determinism becomes an important theological concern.[35] It comes at little surprise, then, that this emphasis on divine monergism is absent from pre-Augustinian patristics and the Eastern church. Seeing the 529 synod as non-ecumenical and therefore non-authoritative (especially in its denouncing of the Eastern saint John Cassian), present day Byzantine theologians are quite adamant that the Eastern tradition has always cataphatically asserted a cooperation of divine grace and human freedom. Vladimir Lossky explains that the fundamental error of the Augustinian–Pelagian debate was that both interlocutors transposed "the mystery of grace on to a rational plane, by which process grace and liberty, realities of the spiritual order, are transformed into two mutually exclusive concepts which then have to

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[34] Augustine, *A Treatise on the Spirit and the Letter* 5, *NPNF1* 5:84.

[35] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 1:280.

be reconciled, as if they were two objects exterior to one another."[36] In his view, the Western church has ever since been entrenched within this rational fallacy of cataphatic theology.

In the above quote, Vladimir Lossky also suggests that there is a nuanced view of the notion of "grace" that exists within Eastern thought. While this "Eastern" understanding of grace can be traced back to many earlier Eastern writers, the current formulation has been developed by neo-Palamite thinkers like Vladimir Lossky and John Meyendorff.[37] Nevertheless, the main development of this understanding is built upon the foundation of the writings of Gregory Palamas and his formulation of the distinction between the divine essence (ουσία) and the divine energy (ενέργεια). The divine essence is common to the three hypostases of the Trinity and, in classic apophatic manner, is transcendent and inaccessible to humanity; the divine energies or activities include everything God has revealed of himself in the economy of salvation, including his attributes, his will and his "uncreated light" – the very light that permeated from Christ's transfigured body (Matthew 13:43) which can be received by every Christian.[38]

In the words of Gregory Palamas, "three elements belong to God: essence, energy, and the triad of the divine hypostases."[39] It is in these three, respectively, that God mysteriously is transcendent, present to His creation and tri-personal. From this basis, Vladimir Lossky writes:

> [T]he western conception of grace implies the idea of causality, grace being represented as an effect of the divine Cause, exactly as in the act of creation; while for eastern theology there is a natural procession, the [uncreated] energies, shining forth eternally from the divine essence. It is in creation alone that God acts as cause, in producing a new subject called to participate in the divine fullness; preserving it, saving it, *granting* grace to it, and guiding it towards its final goal. In the energies *He is*, He exists, He eternally manifests himself.[40]

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[36] Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 198.

[37] Jeffrey D. Finch, "Neo-Palamism, Divining Grace, and the Breach between East and West," in *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, eds., Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung, 233–249.

[38] Ibid, 234–237. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 186–188.

[39] Gregory Palamas, *Capita Physics* 75, quoted in Meyendorf, *Byzantine Theology*, 186.

[40] Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 88–89.

According to Byzantine thinkers, especially after Palamas, Western theology views grace as the result of God's cause – created in this perishable world. In effect, this is a continuation of the Eastern critique of scholasticism's distinction between "uncreated grace" as the inner life of the triune God and "created (supernatural) grace" as the change caused by the divine presence in the individual.[41] However, from the Eastern perspective, there is a rejection of any created supernatural grace. While Palamas does discuss the existence of a created grace in terms of Christ's restoration of the original created beauty in human nature, it is by God's uncreated deifying grace that his reality is experienced in this world.[42] The grace of God is the uncreated and eternal light received in this created and perishable world, and the omnipresence of the Creator in all created things. All created things exist by his uncreated grace.

What then is the relationship between God's uncreated grace and the human will? Earlier, we discussed Maximus the Confessor's descriptions of humans in possession of two wills: the natural will and the gnomic will. After the Fall, humanity's capacity for self-determination is not destroyed, since it is part of the human nature God created. As the French Eastern Orthodox theologian Olivier Clément (1921–2009) puts it:

> With humanity the omnipotence of God gives rise to something radically new. Not a lifeless reflection or a puppet, but a freedom which can oppose God, and put the fulfilment of God's creation in jeopardy by excluding him from it. In the supreme achievement of God's creative omnipotence – for only lifegiving Love can create a free living being – there is an inherent risk. Omnipotence finds fulfilment in self-limitation. In the creative act itself, God in some manner limits himself, withdraws, to give human being space in which to be free. At its highest point omnipotence thus conceals a paradoxical impotence; because the summit of omnipotence is love, and God can do everything except force human beings to love. To enter into love, as we know, is to put ourselves without protection at the mercy of the worst

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[41] It is highly contested whether or not Thomas Aquinas was the first who articulated the notion of "created grace," especially since it does not show up in his *Summa*. A. N. Williams comments, "The application of the term *created grace* to the *Summa* is largely the product of an assumption of homogeneity in scholasticism – that because later scholastics (and later Thomists) used the term, it must also be appropriate for Thomas himself. Thomas' extreme hesitation in using it challenges that assumption, especially since its employment has proved so contentious in the mutual understanding of the East and the West" (A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 87.

[42] Meyendorff, *A Study of Gregory Palamas*, 162–164.

> suffering, that of rejection and abandonment by the one we love. Creation is in the shadow of the cross.[43]

In creating humanity, Clément radically proclaims, God's omnipotence has given rise to God's impotence as found in human free will. God created humanity, as the pinnacle of creation, out of love knowing very well that this very love may not and very much would not be reciprocated – as was revealed in the fall. Nevertheless, today's human freedom is the very sign that the image of God continues to exist in postlapsarian humanity.

This is quite significant if we consider for a moment the modern value of the individual, forming the basis for democracy and human freedom. Earlier, in our discussion of ancestral sin, we spoke of how Maximus the Confessor believes that sin and guilt are a hypostatic rather than an essential quality of humanity. Here, we find that free will is another essential quality of human nature. While enlightenment thinkers of Europe and North America tended to attack Augustinian pessimism about human nature in order to highlight the possibilities of the modern "self," Eastern Orthodox thinkers have consistently argued for a more positive evaluation of humanity. Rather than being bound to the guilt of a forefather, each individual is created with free will and, therefore, capable and responsible for his or her own choices.

However, the Fall also perverted humanity, predisposing us to a sinful disposition – specifically, in the gnomic will. The critical concern here is *how* this self-determination is now used.[44] If a person freely chooses to move towards God, he or she receives the fruits of uncreated grace. However, if a person freely chooses to move away from God, understood as a misuse of his or her self-determination, he or she receives the disastrous fruits of sin. As such, sin is an expression of the gnomic will – a will that, by the seduction of the Devil,

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[43] Olivier Clément, *On Human Being: A Spiritual Anthropology*, trans. Jeremy Hummerstone (London: New City, 2000), 37.

[44] Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 226–230.

corresponds to one's self-love as opposed to divine Love.[45] Hence, the gnomic will is individualistic and separates the person from God and others.

In contrast to the fruits of sin are the fruits of grace. Lossky writes, "For it is not a question of merits but of a co-operation, of a synergy of the two wills, divine and human, a harmony in which grace bears ever more and more fruit, and is appropriated – 'acquired' – by the human person."[46] Lossky says "it is not a question of merit" because grace is a free gift that we must freely receive. In contrast with Pelagius, apart from divine grace and divine initiative, it is impossible to reach salvation and participate in the divine likeness. Likewise, against Augustine, the Eastern perspective does not see divine grace as deterministic upon the human will. Rather, grace is the presence of God within us which we must actively respond to. Within the Byzantine tradition, there is no opposition between grace and free will. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "For we are God's fellow workers (συνεργοί)" (1 Corinthians 3:9, ESV). The ideal relationship between God's grace and human freedom is a synergy of unequals where the energies of God and energies of humanity cooperate with one another.

Relevance for the Zongjiao Re

As we discussed earlier in the last chapter, the Chinese context tends to be disposed towards a synergistic understanding of causation that involves both Heaven or nature and humanity. Confucianism is commonly understood as a philosophy of humanistic action. In the early Zhou dynasty (ca. 1046 BC to ca. 256 BC), Heaven was the supreme deity and moral being that was responsible for various natural phenomena, controlled human affairs and was the source of political authority. Through self-cultivation, humans are able to fulfil the cosmic moral code known as the Mandate of Heaven (*Tian ming*). In particular, the earthly monarch governed by divine right and, if dethroned, lost Heaven's Mandate. Hence, the Zhou

[45] Ibid, 241.

[46] Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 198.

rulers believed Heaven impressed on them the need to overthrow the Shang dynasty (ca. 1750 BC to ca. 1046 BC) whose last king was perceived as a drunken and oppressive scoundrel.[47] For the Confucian, the human agent partners with Heaven to complete cosmic tasks.

Daoism, however, has a very different approach. While Confucianism can be described as a philosophy of action, Daoism is a philosophy of non-action (*wuwei*). As the Daoist sage Laozi writes:

> The pursuit of learning is to increase day after day.
> The pursuit of Tao is to decrease day after day.
> It is to decrease and further decrease until one reaches the point of taking no action.
> An empire is often brought to order by having no activity (laissez-faire).
> If one (likes to) undertake activity, he is not qualified to govern the empire.[48]

This is clearly quite different from the Confucian approach to politics. Laozi does not mean that a person must be inactive or in abandon of the world. Rather, the Daoist engages the world through *wuwei* – a yielding disposition that responds to the natural flow of things. This is why he identifies the pursuit of *Dao*, the "road" or "way," as one where the individual relinquishes oneself and pursues a primordial simplicity (*pu*). In contrast, those who pursue too much knowledge and too many desires have lost their original virtue (*de*). True happiness and freedom ultimately come when one forgets the distinctions between oneself and the universe. Feng Youlan explains *wuwei* in terms of restricting one's activities to only that which is necessary to achieve a certain purpose; we should never overdo anything.[49]

Confucianism and Daoism both propose their own systems of causation. While one is more active than the other, these Chinese philosophies both emphasise the importance of how an individual responds to Heaven or *Dao*. Like Eastern Orthodoxy, these teachings both begin with a kind of first principle – whether it be Heaven or *Dao* as the source of all things. However, a person has a free will to respond to this or, conversely, to reject it. Within

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[47] Herrlee Glessner Creel, *Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-Tung* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 15.

[48] *Laozi* 48, translated in Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 162.

[49] Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History*, 101.

Confucianism, the emphasis is on whether or not an individual embraces the undertaking of self-cultivation; for Daoism, one may become lost in his or her pursuits and ultimately abandon their original virtue. Within these Chinese teachings, the options to flourish or to languish are fully within the capabilities of every human being. In Eastern Orthodoxy, this tension also exists between the natural and gnomic wills, but the individual does not have the ability to overcome the gnomic will without the help of Christ.

In the case of Chinese Buddhism, we have already discussed the difficulties of translating the Indian metaphysics for the Chinese context. While theories of causation within Buddhism are fairly complex and a full treatment here would be impossible, it would be helpful to understand that Buddhism, in comparison with Confucianism and Daoism, is much more indeterministic. The Japanese Buddhist scholar Junjirō Takakusu writes:

> While practically all the schools of thought begin with a static first principle, Buddhism begins with the actual, dynamic world, and the individual, by cultivating oneself, strives to realize the ideal in the end. *Sansara* (the rise and fall of life) is not an onward flow, but a 'wavicle' circle, each wave being a cycle of life appearing on the great orbit of *Sansara*. It has no beginning nor end, just as one cannot point out the beginning of a circle.[50]

This is not to say that there is no cause and effect in Buddhism. *Karma*, for example, fits into the cycle of *Sansara* or *Samsara* as an endless process of cause and effect. But while Confucianism and Daoism all have Heaven or *Dao* playing an initiatory role, within Buddhism, the individual is freely self-creating. Hence, Mahāyāna Buddhism teaches that all sentient beings are freely capable through the buddha-nature within them, often with the help of bodhisattvas that have come before. So, while the beginning of causation is very different from Eastern Orthodoxy, the means one reaches the end are quite similar. That is, while there is an inherent quality of human nature that enables one to achieve salvation (the buddha-nature or the image of God), there still exists the importance of trusting in salvific figure(s).

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[50] Junjirō Takakusu, *The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy*, 3rd ed., eds., Wing-Tsit Chan and Charles A. Moore (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), 37–38.

Ultimately, however, the Buddhist must respond and submit his or her own will to the principles of the Buddha.

As we discussed in the last chapter, the Chinese understandings of causation met difficulties in the Chinese reception of foreign ideologies like Buddhism and Marxism. This has also been true of Chinese Christianity which has seemingly ignored the debates between figures like Augustine and Pelagius. This, as I have argued, has not tended to be an explicit rebuttal against Augustine or Pelagius (or their theological descendants) but an implicit understanding of the gospel from mindsets influenced by China's traditional teachings. Hence the key motif that continues throughout most of China's philosophies and religions – inclusive of Chinese Christianity – is "Heaven engenders, humanity completes." What seems rather curious here is that this Chinese synergistic understanding corresponds quite well with the Eastern Orthodox position. In contrast with the Chinese theologies, Eastern Christian writers articulate an explicit rebuttal against both Augustine and Pelagius. However, much like the Chinese thinking, from the Byzantine perspective, we should not fall into the fallacy of embracing a metaphysics of causation that violates a truly free human nature. Both come to the same basic understanding of the relationship between God (or Heaven) and humanity: it is not simply two wills working in parallel nor a linear cause and effect relationship, but God's will invites humanity's will to respond and cooperate.

Union: Participation in the Divine Energies

Eastern Orthodoxy

A core motivation of much of Orthodox theology is an anthropology whereby humanity is understood as both microcosm and cosmic mediator. For example, Lars Thunberg explains that Maximus the Confessor's "doctrinal and personal positions – as well as his remarkable eclecticism – are motivated by his vision of man as the centre of God's creation and a particular object of His providence, man as both microcosm and mediator.

Christian spirituality implies for him the restitution of this microcosm and the fulfilment of this mediating function."[51] In Orthodox cosmology, God formed two aspects of creation: the noetic and the material. In the noetic, he created angels who have no material bodies. In the latter, God formed galaxies, plants, animals, etc. The only creature to participate in both the noetic and the material realms is humanity. Hence, humanity is a microcosm or a "little universe" of the whole of creation. But because of this, God has also given humanity the responsibility as cosmic mediator. This means to bring unity to all the forces of division in creation.[52] Timothy Ware puts it this way, "As microcosm, … man is the one in whom the world is summed up; as mediator, he is the one through whom the world is offered back to God."[53] Humanity has a central role in all of creation.

However, after the Fall, the divisions in creation are accentuated even more and are impossible to overcome by human abilities alone. It is only Jesus Christ, the new Adam, who can once again bring mediation across all the cosmos. On the one hand, the Christ-event had cosmic ramifications because Christ is the divine Logos and, as God, the Creator of the universe. Yet, he was also human and, therefore, microcosm and mediator. Hence, Orthodox theologians consistently consider the Incarnation to have cosmic significance.[54] In a manner quite similar to K. H. Ting, the cosmic Christology of Eastern Orthodoxy identifies a close connection between creation and redemption.

Referring to Jesus, Athanasius is often quoted saying, "For He was made man that we might be made God."[55] While weight is often given to the latter portion of this sentence, the real significance is in the first – God became man. It is because of the Incarnation that

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[51] Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 19. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Brian E. Dale (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 322.

[52] Maximus the Confessor specifies five divisions that humanity must overcome: (1) created and uncreated, (2) noetic and material, (3) heaven and earth, (4) paradise and the world and (5) man and woman. Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 143.

[53] Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Way*, 2nd ed. (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 50. See Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 142.

[54] Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 152.

[55] Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word* 54.3, *NPNF2* 4:66.

deification is made possible in humanity. As Maximus the Confessor puts it, "[Christ] does human things in a way transcending the human, showing, in accordance with the closest union, the human energy united without change to the divine power, since the [human] nature, united without confusion to [the divine] nature, is completely interpenetrated, and in no way annulled, nor separated from the Godhead hypostatically united to it."[56] Fully God and fully human united without confusion.

Furthermore, known for his defence against the monothelite (one will) controversy, Maximus argues that Jesus has two natural wills – one from his divinity and the other from his humanity. Yet, at the same time, Jesus does not have a third, gnomic will because, as a divine Person, he can never be deprived the knowledge of good and need to deliberate over a decision.[57] As quoted earlier, there is a complete interpenetration (περιχωρήσας) of divinity and humanity. In the Incarnation, Jesus Christ is both deified humanity and humanising divinity. For Maximus, this interpenetration means not only that "the divine nature is able to penetrate human nature wholly, completely, and thoroughly," but, moreover, that "human nature is able to penetrate the divine nature *wholly*, *completely* and *thoroughly*."[58]

Herein lies the crux of recapitulation. As we have discussed, all of humanity is made according to the image of God. Christ is the real Image of God and the prototype for all humanity. At the Christ-event, "God assumed humanity in a way which did not exclude any human hypostasis, but which opened to all of them the possibility of restoring their unity in Himself. He became, indeed, the 'new Adam,' in whom every man finds his own nature realized perfectly and fully, without the limitations which would have been inevitable if Jesus

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[56] Maximus the Confessor, *Difficulty* 5, translated in Andrew Louth, trans., *Maximus the Confessor* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1996), 175.

[57] von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy*, 265–271. Louth, *Maximus the Confessor*, 61. This is most profoundly shown in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus, in the natural will of his humanity, fears death yet still chooses the good.

[58] Michael E. Butler, "Hypostatic Union and Monotheletism: The Dyothelite Christology of St. Maximus the Confessor," (PhD thesis, Fordham University, 1993), 181.

were only a human personality."[59] As the new Adam, the new head of the human race, Christ willingly took on a mortal body and accepted death. There is no Anselmian satisfaction theory of atonement here. Christ's death on the cross was effective, not because Jesus was innocent (though he was) but because he was incarnate. In Christ's death on the cross he brought life by vanquishing the cosmic reality of death. In his interpenetration of humanity and divinity, Christ restores the true possibility of the individual's role as microcosm and mediator.

Deification, then, should be understood as the humanity's fulfilment of God's creative purposes – God created humans to become "participants of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4, NRSV). Yet deification is not due to human nature, but due to the interpenetration of divinity and humanity in Christ and offered by God's grace. Additionally, Maximus does not see the relationship between humanity and his prototype as now an ontological unity, thereby blurring the distinction between Creator and creation leading to a form of pantheism or panentheism.[60] For Maximus, the goal of deification is to become all that God is, save his essence.[61] Gregory Palamas writes,

> God in his completeness was incarnate, even though all the divine hypostases were not incarnate; he has united one of the three hypostases with our 'mixture' … not through essence, but by the hypostasis; thus God in his completeness deifies those who are worthy of this, by uniting himself with them not through the hypostasis – that belonged to Christ alone – nor through the essence, but through a small part of the uncreated *energies* and the uncreated divinity… while yet being entirely present in each.[62]

This is really a continuation of the earlier discussion where Palamas identifies three elements of God's being – essence, uncreated energies, and the triad of the divine hypostases. On the one hand, if deification were understood as humanity's union with the hypostasis of Christ, this would lead to a confusion of the Trinity as having more than three hypostases.[63] On the

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[59] Meyendorf, *Byzantine Theology*, 159.

[60] Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator*, 429–432.

[61] Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 87.

[62] Gregory Palamas, *Against Akindynos*, 5.26, quoted and translated in Meyendorff, *Gregory Palamas*, 182.

[63] Meyendorff, *Gregory Palamas*, 183.

other hand, if deification were union with divine essence, this would lead to a confusion of humanity as being transcendent gods by nature. Rather, the Byzantine understanding of 2 Peter 1:4 is that deification is "union by grace making us participate in the divine nature, without our essence becoming thereby the essence of God." [64]

Relevance for the Zongjiao Re

In our reflections of the Eastern Orthodox understanding of unity in the context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment, let us work our way backwards across the major concepts discussed in this section, beginning with the distinction between divine essence and energies. As discussed in the last chapter, *Tian ren heyi* is a central motif in all Chinese philosophies and religions. As seen amongst the Chinese Christians surveyed, it is also a central motif of Chinese theology as well. T. C. Chao saw the Chinese motif as problematic in that it could destroy one's individuality. However, the Eastern Orthodox understanding of deification is to reject humanity's union with Christ's hypostasis. In deification, each individual maintains his or her own hypostasis. For Liu Xiaofeng, his main concern with *Tian ren heyi* was the apparent fallacy of distinguishing between the transcendent and the immanent – in his assessment, the Chinese worldview only allowed for one domain to exist. But this is still true within Byzantine thought. According to Palamas, God's being is mysteriously transcendent in his divine essence. Yet, divine and human essences can never be blurred. Deification is therefore humanity's participation with God's divine energies – the immanent activities of a transcendent being.

The second characteristic of the Eastern Orthodox teaching of deification valuable in the Second Chinese Enlightenment is the Christus Victor atonement theory. As has been discussed at great length, the revived interest in sin since the 1980s and 1990s has less to do

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[64] Lossky, *Mystical Theology*, 87.

with an appreciation of Augustine's teachings as it has to do with the problem of evil in Chinese society. The fundamental challenge of Augustine's teachings in May Fourth and European enlightenments was the notion of inherited guilt. For Second Chinese Enlightenment scholars of Sino-Christian Theology, while Augustine's teachings have renewed interest, the focus has been on sin's role in highlighting the limitations of humanity and the need for repentance and confession. The Eastern church has never developed an independent understanding of original sin, apart from critiques against Augustine. Rather, following the type C approach of Irenaeus, Eastern Christians assert that atonement is less about satisfying an inherited guilt as it is a recapitulation – a re-heading of the human race. God breaches the divide between the transcendent and the immanent in the incarnation. In Jesus Christ, humanity and divinity are interpenetrated affording humanity the possibility of a divine life. It is not a work of human nature because, as with the scholars of Sino-Christian Theology, there is a limitation in our human natures alone; deification is only made possible by divine grace and initiative out of the hypostatic union of Christ. We can only overcome such shortcomings because of the new Adam, Jesus Christ.

Finally, Eastern Orthodoxy's understanding of humanity as microcosm and mediator is vitally important in the discussion within the Chinese context. One of the major arguments of Tu Wei-ming (Du Weiming, 1940–) has been to understand the metaphysics of Chinese thinking as having a "anthropocosmic" dimension. In his commentary on the Confucian classic *Zhongyong*, he writes, "It is true that human nature is imparted from heaven, but human beings are not merely creatures and heaven alone does not exhaust the process of creativity. In an ultimate sense, human beings, in order to manifest their humanity, must themselves fully participate in the creative process of the cosmos."[65] In a manner similar to K. H. Ting's cosmic Christology, the Confucian scholar speaks about human nature that is

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[65] Tu Wei-Ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness*, rev. and enlarged ed. (New York, NY: SUNY, 1989), 78.

both creature and co-creator. In regards to second characteristic, his belief is that the Chinese notion of moral self-cultivation is not merely a process isolated to the realm of an individual. Rather, it suggests that Heaven empowers humanity with a sense of morality to realise, through self-cultivation, the will of Heaven. Moreover, it claims that there is an interconnectedness with Heaven and with the rest of the universe.

But is this not also the pursuit of Eastern Orthodoxy? God imparts his divine grace upon the humanity with a desire that humanity will freely choose the will of God. This is in great contrast with gnomic will that turns divine Love into self-love, focusing on individualistic desires and separating the person from God and others. The goal as set by Eastern Christians is for all Christians to freely turn towards God, receive from the abundance of his grace and, by the Holy Spirit, participate in the divine likeness. Moreover, in classic type C manner, humans were created immature but with the explicit intention of reaching moral perfection through deification. Humans are called to be mediators to offer the world back to God. While this was made virtually impossible by the Fall, Christ has restored this vision and ability to humanity. In the view of T. C. Chao, the role of Christianity is not merely for the salvation of individuals alone, but also as the basis for reconstruction of society. Likewise, both K. H. Ting and Tu Wei-ming argue that humans are both creatures and co-creators with God (or Heaven), called upon to cultivate not only the self, but the world at large. In a similar fashion, the type C theology of Eastern Orthodoxy esteems to transform all the cosmos through the transformation of the individual.

Some may accuse the Eastern church as bearing a similar sectarian view of culture as Chinese type A theologies and being quite static in its relations with the world. But this assessment would be ignorant of the church's missionary history that predates Catholic and Protestant missions and, more recently, during Tsarist Russia. Despite setbacks to Orthodoxy in the last few centuries due to persecutions under Islam and communism, the Eastern churches understand their relationship with the world in this way: "Trinitarian theology points

to the fact that God is in God's own self a life of communion and that God's involvement in history aims at drawing humanity and creation in general into this communion with God's very life."[66] The Eastern position does not see missions as primarily seeking the transmission of intellectual convictions or moral commands, but the transmission of the unity in diversity found in God himself. Deification is not merely the task of uniting an individual with God but empowering the individual to fulfil the God-given responsibility as mediator. This means a continual participation with the divine works in this world to bring harmony where divisions once prevailed. To put it another way, humans are given the task of mediator not only to offer the world to God, but to offer God to this world.

MODERNITY AND NATION-BUILDING

In the previous chapter, we have seen how the three major theological types that have arisen in China and have taken very different approaches in grappling with the categories of sin, synergy and union. In this chapter, we have so far spent most of our time exploring the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* and how these same categories have been understood. While the three Chinese theological types explicitly utilise Western resources as the bases of their theologies, they also rely (both implicitly and explicitly) upon the Chinese traditional teachings to articulate their views. These Chinese theologies have also shown to resonate with the theological concerns prevalent in Eastern Orthodoxy. However, in our excursion into the Eastern Orthodox world, one pertinent area that has been largely overlooked requires a certain amount of attention – namely the Second Chinese Enlightenment's quest for the modernisation and nation-building of China. Hence, it would now be worthwhile to look

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[66] Orthodox Advisor Group to the WCCC-CWME, "Go Forth in Peace: Orthodox Perspectives on Mission," in James A Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans, eds., *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization I: Basic Statements 1974–1991* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), 204.

briefly at how Eastern Orthodoxy provides useful tools for the socio-political concerns of China today.

Theological Methodology

Byzantine theology must possess the inherent ability to engage with modern thinking if it desires to serve a long-term purpose in the modernisation of China. Yet, it is quite apparent from the writings of many Orthodox theologians that their methods tend to emphasise apophatic rather than cataphatic theology, make use of antinomies and prefer the language of mysticism and spirituality over rational argumentation. (Interestingly, this does seem quite similar to Daoist methods which tends to use an apophatic and mystical language.) This is not to say that Eastern Orthodoxy neglects theological affirmation or logic. Rather, its theology is draped with mystery: God shares his divine existence with humanity yet continues to remain fully incomprehensible to the present world.

This difference in theological approaches may be highlighted with a brief comparison of the near-contemporaries Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) and Gregory Palamas (1296–1359). In the West, Aquinas is identified as a great Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher and is regarded as a supreme example of scholasticism. In the East, Palamas is revered as a preeminent theologian known for his articulation of the essence–energies distinction and his role in the hesychast controversy against the Calabrian monk Barlaam (c. 1290–1348). As a monk from Mount Athos, Palamas sought to provide a theological basis for the ascetic practices and mystical experiences of other monks of Athos known as hesychasm. However, his debates with Barlaam eventually developed into a disputation over the foundations of theology and the role of spiritual experience in theology. A. N. Williams concludes, “[I]t forced Byzantine theology to choose between philosophy and spirituality as an ancillary and, following the triumph of the pro-hesychast party, sharply distinguished the East’s theological

method from that of the West, and especially, from that of the scholastics."[67] This is not to say that Palamas, who was trained in Aristotelian logic, did not appreciate philosophy or that Aquinas, who arguably wrote his Summa as a work of mystical theology,[68] was not interested in spirituality. What it does show is that while scholasticism served as an important precursor to modernity in the West, hesychasm solidified the preference for spiritual experiences as an epistemological basis for Byzantine theology.

As we move towards more recent Orthodox writers, it becomes quite apparent that a number of them still maintain this approach to theology as their *modus operandi*. This is quite noticeable, for example, in the writings of Vladimir Lossky (1903–1958). Hence, in a quote from earlier in this chapter, Lossky argues that both Augustine and Pelagius erred by taking a spiritual reality like the synergistic relationship between God and humanity and forcing it into the rational plane. However, this approach to theology is not universal in all Orthodox writers. There are some, like John Meyendorff (1926–1992) and Timothy Ware (1934–), who live in countries like France, the United Kingdom and the United States and write intentionally to systematically articulate Orthodox thoughts to a modern, Western audience. Additionally, there has the been the growth of Byzantine writers who have attempted to espouse the Orthodox views on such modern subjects as those heralded during the May Fourth Enlightenment: Mr. Science[69] and Mr. Democracy.[70] This shows that, while Eastern theology often operates with apophatic, antinomic and mystical language, it also has the intellectual resources for serving the basis of addressing key concerns of modernity.

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[67] A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 8–9.

[68] This latter thesis is taken up by Williams in her later essay, A. N. Williams, "Mystical Theology Redux: The Pattern of Aquinas' *Summa Theologiæ*," *Modern Theology* 13, no. 1 (January 1997): 53–74.

[69] Alexei V. Nesteruk, *Light from the East: Theology, Science, and the Eastern Orthodox Tradition* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2003). John Breck and Lyn Breck, *Stages on Life's Way: Orthodox Thinking on Bioethics* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005). Daniel Buxhoeveden and Gayle Woloschak, eds., *Science and Eastern Orthodox Church* (London: Ashgate, 2011).

[70] Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Byzantium, Orthodoxy, and Democracy," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 71, no. 1 (March 2003): 75–98.

Not only has Eastern Orthodox theology been seen as advantageous from an Eastern perspective, but there has also been growing interests coming from Western scholarship as well. In particular, many studies have been conducted with hopes to clarify (mis)understandings of the theologies of many significant figures of the Western church (e.g., Augustine,[71] Thomas Aquinas,[72] Martin Luther,[73] John Calvin[74] and Karl Barth[75]). Many of these individuals are of particular interest to the growing number of scholars in Sino-Christian Theology and some of the newer urban churches. Karl Barth and John Calvin and many other "heroes" of the Western church may be much more multifaceted than previously understood and may or may not be as useful within China's present context. Yet at the same time, this begs the question of whether Byzantine theology can act as a corrective not only for modern Western theology, but Chinese theology as well.

Finally, while Eastern Orthodox writings are attempting to operate within modernity, the theological tradition has also been used to critique modern ideas and extremes. Firstly, this has been seen amongst Christians of both the East[76] and the West[77] who find Orthodoxy useful in addressing postmodern concerns such as the understandings of language and of the

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[71] Gerald Bonner, "Augustine's Conception of Deification," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 37 (1986): 369–386. Robert Puchniak, "Augustine's Conception of Deification, Revisited," in *Theōsis: Deification in Christian Theology*, eds. Stephen Finlan and Vladimir Kharlamov (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2006).

[72] A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[73] Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998). Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005).

[74] Julie Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010).

[75] Adam Neder, *Participation in Christ: An Entry Into Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009).

[76] Christos Yannaras, *Postmodern Metaphysics*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2004). Christos Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God: Heidegger and the Areopagite*, trans. Haralambos Ventis (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2005). Arthur Bradley, "God *sans* Being: Derrida, Marion and 'A Paradoxical Writing of the Word Without,'" *Literature and Theology* 14, no. 3 (2000): 299–312.

[77] Stanley J. Grenz, *Social God and Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 323–336. Brian D. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (El Cajon, CA: Emergent YS, 2004).

self. The Greek philosopher Christos Yannaras (1935–), for example, as early as the 1960s agrees with Martin Heidegger's (1889–1976) judgment of the "ontotheological" nature of traditional philosophy and theology, and urges for the priority of apophaticism in theological discourse. Additionally, Eastern Christianity also provides an aesthetic dimension which can be quite attractive when juxtaposed against the whitewashed walls of many Protestant churches. There are many scholars of the Second Chinese Enlightenment who, along with studying subjects like philosophy, history and the humanities, others have explored aesthetic themes in art and architecture.[78] Like Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox liturgy makes use of many of the senses which provides an aura of mystery through the incense, iconography and sacred chants. Hence, while Eastern Orthodoxy can provide the intellectual resources to address the Second Chinese Enlightenment's search for modernity and nation-building, it can also provide the mystical resources to compensate for modernity's extremes as well.

Orthodoxy and the "Third Space"

Another matter worth briefly discussing is the Second Chinese Enlightenment's hopes to articulate a "Chinese culture." As we have previously discussed at length, the thoroughgoing communist revolution bound the country to Maoist dogmatism. It would only be the 1980s, with the advent of the Second Chinese Enlightenment, where individuals were once again liberated to freely think and critically reassess their situation. On the one hand, ancient Chinese teachings which were ostracised during the May Fourth Enlightenment would now become saviours resurrected from a dead Chinese culture. This has led some, like the sinologist Arif Dirlik, to argue that traditional teachings like Confucianism have been reinvented in the present context in order to bring clarity and renewed meaning to "Chinese

[78] Ding Fang, et al., eds., *Wenhua yu Yishu Luntan* [Culture and Art Forum] (Hong Kong: Art Currents, 1993). Liu Xiaofeng, "Sino-Christian Theology in the Modern Context," in *Sino-Christian Studies in China*, eds. Yang Huilin and Daniel H. N. Yeung (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 63.

culture."[79] On the other hand, Chinese intellectuals clamoured for the multiplicity of foreign ideas in philosophy, history and the social sciences. However, the goal was not to simply install a Westernised China nor to return to the imperial state. Some thinkers of the Second Chinese Enlightenment would attempt to create a new identity – a "Third Space" that mediates a politics of polarity between dominant cultures.[80]

With this in mind, it is important to remember that Eastern Christians too have persisted through oppressive regimes and attempted to reconstruct their identities in the new realities. One example of this would be India where many of the same nation-building aspirations that China has had have existed for decades. While Eastern Orthodoxy does not have a significant presence in India, the wider tradition of Eastern Christianity has. In particular, there are the Saint Thomas Christians who trace their heritage back to the first century Apostle Thomas, one of Jesus' first followers. Today forming the Orthodox Syrian Church, these Indian Christians are part of the larger body of Oriental Orthodox Christianity that rejects the council of Chalcedon. Yet it is from the basis of Chalcedonian Christology that Paulos Mar Gregorios (1922–1996), the former Orthodox Syrian metropolitan bishop of Delhi, articulates his theology for the Indian context. In particular, he finds significant riches in the thinking of the Cappadocian Father Gregory of Nyssa (c.335–395) and the great Byzantine theologian Maximus the Confessor (c.580–662) – the latter of whom saw his own work as an extension of Chalcedonian Christology. Relying particularly on the theology of these Eastern heroes, Gregorios has written several monographs on theological anthropology in his critique against Western culture.[81]

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[79] Arif Dirlik, "Confucius in the Borderlands: Global Capitalism and the Reinvention of Confucianism," *boundary 2* 22, no. 3 (1995): 229–273.

[80] Homi K. Bhabha, "The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 209.

[81] Paulos Mar Gregorios, *The Human Presence: An Orthodox View of Nature* (Geneva: WCC, 1978). Paulos Mar Gregorios, *Cosmic Man – The Divine Presence: The Theology of St. Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 330 to 395 A.D.)* (New York, NY: Paragon House, 1988).

For example, Paulos Mar Gregorios believes that the West has created inappropriate tensions between God, humanity and nature. On the one hand, Western Christianity has emphasised the darkness of nature such that Christians were instructed to forsake the material and turn towards the spiritual found in God – humanity must submit to God. On the other hand, our technological civilisation has esteemed humanity's mastery over the forces of nature – nature must submit to humanity. However, Gregorios believes these are false rivalries. First, humanity itself is part of nature. Additionally, God is not bound by the physical but sustains both humanity and nature. Hence, it is wrong for humanity to dominate nature or even to be a steward of it. Humanity, like the mountains and the trees and the rest of nature, join in a cosmic symphony to praise God. Gregorios writes,

> A secular technology of mastery of nature for oneself is the "original" sin, of refusing our mediatory position between God and the universe, dethroning God, and claiming mastery for the sake of indulging our own cupidity, avarice, and greed.
>
> The mastery of nature must be held within the mystery of worship. Otherwise we lose both mastery and mystery."[82]

Focusing on the Eastern view that humanity was created as both microcosm and mediator, this Indian Christian critiques the West and petitions for the construction of a new culture that does justice to humanity's relationship with the cosmos and God. While this can be seen as quite advantageous in the industrialisation of India, Paulos Mar Gregorios provides a challenge that is also applicable in a China that is rapidly becoming the largest economy in the world and continues to assert its mastery over nature.

Another example is Eastern Christianity's role in Russia. The Orthodox theologian Aristotle Papanikolaou argues that the revival in contemporary Byzantine theology has been born out of a postcolonial attempt to shed the "effective history" of four centuries of oppression under the Mongols, Ottoman Turks and communism.[83] After successful victories over the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century, there emerged the so-called "Russian school" of

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[82] Gregorios, *The Human Presence*, 89.

[83] Aristotle Papanikolaou, "Orthodoxy, Post-Modernism, and Ecumenism: The Difference that Divine–Human Communion Makes," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 42, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 527–544.

Byzantine theology when the first Orthodox thinkers like Vladimir Sergeevich Solovyov (1853–1900) and Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov (1871–1944) began to engage modern humanism.[84] Using German idealism and traditional Orthodox teachings on the divine-human union in Christ, Solovyov articulates his central thesis: the humanity of God. This was his attempt to understand God's transcendence and immanence within creation. The affirmation of the humanity of God meant that creation is intrinsic, not extrinsic, to the life of God. Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov, who shifted from a Marxist persuasion to Eastern Orthodoxy as a basis for constructing a political theology,[85] continued this thesis by arguing that God is always God for "me" – that is, for creation. While God's essence (ουσία) is neither limited by creation nor exhausted by it, God in God's essence is Creator and Redeemer.

As communism took over Russia, the Russian school would die out only to be reborn amongst the Russian diaspora in the Neopatristic school including individuals like Georges Florovsky (1893–1979), Vladimir Lossky and John Meyendorff. Again, these theologians would assert God's concern for creation through the divine–human union in Christ, focusing on two themes: the essence–energies distinction of Gregory Palamas (leading many of these theologians to be known as neo-Palamite) and the three hypostases and one essence of the Trinity.[86] In regards to the former, while human reason tends to function along a law of non-contradiction, the essence–energies distinction affirms a non-opposition of opposites where God is both transcendent and immanent. Instead of the modern quest for absolute truth statements, theology should be antinomic, apophatic and shrouded by mystery. In regards to Trinitarian theology, the categories of hypostasis and essence provide a foundation to understand personhood as irreducibly unique and free. Therefore, through participation in the

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[84] Paul Valliere, *Modern Russian Theology: Bukharev, Soloviev, Bulgakov: Orthodox Theology in a New Key* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000).

[85] Rowan Williams, ed., *Sergii Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999).

[86] Aristotle Papanikolaou, *Being with God: Trinity, Apophaticism and Divine–Human Communion* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

divine energies, the individual person is both irreducibly unique to the common human nature and, in transcendence, free from the limitations of humanity.

Both the Russian school and the Neopatristic school took the traditional Eastern Orthodox teaching of the divine–human union in Christ and expanded to respond to the modernity and, later, the postmodernity they encountered. While Western Europe and Western Christianity were greatly impacted by the events of the Reformation, the Enlightenment, modernity and now postmodernity, Eastern Europe and Eastern Christianity were not. During two moments when Russian Orthodox Christians were given the opportunity to interface with Western modernity and postmodernity, they would, like the Second Chinese Enlightenment, clamour for a new cultural identity built in alterity from the politics of opposition. After enduring a long legacy of oppression, Russian Orthodox Christians and Paulos Mar Gregorios find that Eastern Christianity provides vital resources for building a Third Space. Can this be true also of the Second Chinese Enlightenment?

BEYOND SIMILARITIES

I have attempted to focus on the three themes of sin, synergy and union from the perspective of Eastern Orthodox theology and within certain voices of China's religious context. This has shown how there is an incredible similarity between the Chinese theological concerns and the core concerns of the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* or deification. On the one hand, there was a presentation of comparing ideas across two quite divergent families of thought. Yet on the other hand, this has shown that there is a natural development from within Chinese theology that carries similar theological concerns of Eastern Orthodoxy without any explicit connections to begin with. Some may consider this serendipitous coincidence or the providence of God. However one may classify these developments, it is important to recognise that the connections show that Eastern Orthodoxy can be utilised as a

complement or supplement for certain areas of today's academic discourse in Sino-Christian Theology. While there is inevitably room for improvement, we have seen how there is much "synergy" between China and Byzantium.

CONCLUSION

> By his gracious condescension God became man and is called man for the sake of man and by exchanging his condition for ours revealed the power that elevates man to God through his love for God and brings God down to man because of his love for man. By this blessed inversion, man is made God by divinization and God is made man by hominization.[1]

With these words, Maximus the Confessor (580–662) provides his own rendering of the "blessed inversion" formula embraced by many adherents of Byzantine theology. It is this *theosis* or deification that many Western theologians consider to be a distinct quality of Eastern Christianity. Yet, throughout this study, I have also argued that *theosis* is not merely a core element of Eastern Orthodoxy, but it is also an underlying theme within another "Eastern" Christianity – Chinese Christianity. However, the history of Chinese Christian theology has been greatly influenced and shaped by the developments of a socio-political context and a continued return to the Chinese traditional philosophies and religions. Hence, one of the main goals of this study has been to see if *theosis* can form a useful basis of a Chinese contextual theology in the Second Chinese Enlightenment. But before we explore this discussion further, it would perhaps be useful to review some of the key points revealed by this study.

HOMO RELIGIOSUS AND THE CHINESE ENLIGHTENMENTS

From the outset, one of the major academic outcomes proposed for this study was an analysis of the Chinese enlightenments. As we discussed in great detail in chapter one, the Chinese enlightenments have tended to follow two models of enlightenment – one from France and the other from Germany. During the May Fourth Enlightenment, secular reformers sought to eradicate all feudal systems much like the French Enlightenment a

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[1] Maximus the Confessor, *Ambiguum* 7; trans. and quoted in Maximus the Confessor, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Jesus Christ: Selected Writings From St. Maximus*, trans. Paul M. Blowers and Robert Louis Wilken (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2003), 60.

century and a half before it. In the Chinese context, one of the main culprits of feudalistic thinking was Confucianism. While some attempted to reform the ancient Chinese traditional teachings, all spiritual and religious thought would seemingly be decimated by the fervour of an ideological revolution. However, a new "religious" reality would be considered by some as the ultimate fulfilment of the quest for enlightenment: Maoist dogmatism.

Despite the communist strides to destroy any competing voice, the Second Chinese Enlightenment reopened China in the 1980s to renewed possibilities for religious belief. As we discussed in chapter one, this second period looked to a German model of enlightenment that – rather than seek another revolution – turned towards ideological reform. This meant that intellectuals would now be much more sympathetic to China's historical legacy and traditional teachings, resulting in what would be called a "religious fever" – *zongjiao re*. Converts to all religions would grow at an incredible rate within this officially atheistic country. Even at the academic level, scholars in the leading secular academic institutions of China would argue that certain key religious ideas were necessary for the future of China.

In a way, this analysis of the Chinese enlightenments has revealed a very important point: the essence of Chinese culture includes an inclination towards religion and religious practice. In what some anthropologists call *homo religiosus*, the grand experiment to exterminate all religiosity in Maoist China had failed. China has had a long spiritual heritage which has shaped her identity as a people and a nation. While much of this upsurge in religious interest began when the Cultural Revolution ended in the late 1970s, religion continues today to play a vitally important role in China. But the Chinese enlightenments do not merely highlight the importance of religion in and of itself; they also claim that the socio-political concerns of modernisation and nation-building must also be addressed by every major ideological system in China.

Hence, the formation of a Chinese contextual theology within the May Fourth and Second Chinese Enlightenments must grapple with questions highlighted by the two poles of

China's religio-philosophical traditions and her socio-political quests. On the one hand, we have seen how this has played out in Sino-Christian Theology (*hanyu jidu shenxue*). In particular, scholars have explored subjects like the doctrine of "original sin" to deal with questions of anthropodicy because of the lack within Chinese traditional thought in grappling with the problem of evil in a fundamentally good human nature. But, on the other hand, we have also seen this throughout several chapters implicitly within the teachings of Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng, 1903–1972), explicitly in the writings of T. C. Chao (Zhao Zichen, 1888–1979), and quite diplomatically in the speeches of K. H. Ting (Ding Guangxun, 1915–). But what have been the basic theological approaches provided for dealing with the concerns of the two Chinese enlightenments?

EVOLVING FRAMEWORKS

In the past, there have been several frameworks employed to understand and organise the broad landscape of Chinese Christian theology. However, this has often tended to focus on certain debates and impasses, resulting in the use of stereotypes like "fundamentalist" or "patriot." In order to break away from these false dichotomies and to better clarify the theological answers given, this study has attempted to use a tripartite typology as it was developed by the historian Justo L. González and utilised by the missiologists Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder. On the one hand, the hope was that the use of this tripartite typology would help to clarify the historical tendencies of Chinese contextual theology across the two Chinese enlightenments and highlight areas of lacking. On the other hand, this study has attempted to test this typology in the concrete context of China. How has it faired?

The typology used for this study was primarily developed by Justo L. González to understand the tendencies of historical theology, as shown in the following table:[2]

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[2] Justo L. González, *Christian Thought Revisited: Three Types of Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 59.

	Type A	Type B	Type C
Prototype	Tertullian	Origen	Irenaeus
Key theme	Law	Truth	History
God	Lawgiver Judge	Ineffable One Transcendent	Shepherd Father
Creation	Complete	Originally spiritual Double	Begun
Sin	Breaking the Law	Not contemplating the One	Anticipatory disobedience
Original Sin	Inherited	Individual	Human solidarity
Human Predicament	Moral debt	Forgetfulness Obfuscation	Subjection
Work of Christ	Expiation Forgiveness New law	Example Teaching Illumination	Victory Liberation Opening the future
Sacraments	Washing Merit	Reminders Symbols	Grafting Nutrition
Eschaton	Kingdom of Law and Order	Contemplation return	Kingdom of freedom and growth
Scripture	Moral code Prophecy	Allegory	Typology Prophecy

Justo L. González found it was helpful to identify three theological types. Dorothy Sölle develops a parallel typology that focuses on contemporary theology and also identifies three types: Orthodox, Liberal and Radical.[3] However, for González, he gives a much broader analysis across the history of Christian thought. In contrast with Sölle, he arbitrarily labels his types A, B and C. Type A has Tertullian of Carthage (c. 160–c. 220) as its main prototype and emphasises the divine law as its key theme. Type B looks to Origen of Alexandria (185–232) as its main forerunner and has a view of truth – or more commonly, philosophy as the *ancilla theologiae* (handmaiden of theology). Finally, type C looks to Irenaeus of Lyon (c. 130–c. 200) as the first propagator and uses the grand narrative of history as its key theme. While some, like Sölle, may immediately describe type A as conservative theology and type B as liberal theology, González develops a system with a third option, type C, that embraces

[3] Dorothee Sölle, *Thinking About God: An Introduction to Theology* (London: SCM, 1990).

theologies as divergent as the likes of Irenaeus, Karl Barth (1886–1968) and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) – "heretics" and "saints" alike.

González's typology has been further developed by the two missiologists Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder in their important work, *Constants in Context*. Summarised in the following table, they have argued that this typology is useful in the context of missions.[4]

	Type A	**Type B**	**Type C**
Prototype	Tertullian	Origen	Irenaeus
Key theme	Law	Truth	History
Christology	Person: high Redemption: satisfaction Exclusive	Person: - Premodern: high - Modern: low Redemption: exemplar Inclusive/modified pluralist	Person: low Redemption: liberation Inclusive/moderate pluralist
Ecclesiology	Institutional	Mystical communion; sacrament	Herald/servant
Eschatology	Futurist Individual	Realised Individual	Inaugurated Historical
Salvation	Spiritual	Premodern: spiritual illumination Modern: holistic	Holistic
Anthropology	Negative Hierarchical	Positive Premodern: hierarchical Modern: equality	Positive Premodern: less hierarchical Modern: equality
Culture	Premodern: classicist Modern: empirical Counter-cultural or translation models	Premodern: classicist Modern: empirical Anthropological model	Premodern: classicist Modern: empirical Praxis or moderate counter-cultural

Particularly, their goal has been to show that despite various contexts around the world, Christian missionaries have always provided answers to six theological constants or concerns: Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, salvation, anthropology and culture. However, as we have suggested in the introduction and seen throughout this study, this typology does not exist without its flaws when applied to Chinese contextual theology. Perhaps part of the problem is

[4] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 37.

that their study focuses on mission history rather than global contextual theology. Nevertheless, there still are some glaring issues of the typology.

Of particular concern is the theological constant of "culture." Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder make use of the work of Bernard Lonergan who distinguishes culture as being either classicist or empiricist:

> From the classicist perspective, culture is normative, universal and permanent. There is really only one culture, and that is the culture of the West. Culture has developed, of course, but in Western modernity it has reached its final achievement. A person of culture, therefore, has constructed his or her world out of the best of Western achievements.…
>
> From the empiricist perspective, however, culture is defined as a set of meanings and values that informs a way of life. As such, therefore, culture is neither normative nor universal, nor is it seen as a permanent achievement. Culture is simply the way people have sought and continue to seek to make sense out of their lives in particular situations. It may not be perfect; it may be seriously flawed. But it is basically something healthy and good. From this perspective, no one culture can be considered better than another.[5]

The first major problem with this theological constant is its starting place in the Occident. To put it crudely, a culture can either be seen as "Western" or just another culture. Why is the West the main reference point? Why is it not the Jew and the Gentile, the Greek and the barbarian, or the Chinese and the foreign devil? Additionally, is the "classicist" understanding something to be applied to the indigenous culture, to the foreign, imported culture, or to a new hybridised or hyphenated culture?

Another pressing question is what is meant by the very complex term "culture." Following Robert Schreiter, the authors do suggest that "culture" should have ideational (i.e., beliefs, values, and code of conduct), performance (i.e., celebrations and customs) and material (i.e., language, food, clothing, etc.) dimensions.[6] But why is the question of Christianity's relationship with other religions listed under "Christology"? Of course, the terms "exclusive," "inclusive" and "pluralist" are normally used in the theology of religions to discuss how Christians understand the relationship between Christ's salvific work and non-Christians. However, does not a culture involve the religious and philosophical traditions that

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[5] Ibid, 47.

[6] Ibid.

rise up with ideational, performance and material qualities? Moreover, how do the socio-political concerns of a context affect this view of "culture"?

As we saw in this study's introduction, Michael Nai Chiu Poon of Princeton Theological Seminary has also pointed out that the "contexts" defined by Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder in *Constants in Context* largely utilised six historical periods that are based largely on major events in European and North American history like the discovery of the Americas and the French Enlightenment. While Christianity has existed in China for nearly a millennium and a half, attempts at creating a contextual theology in China have arguably occurred across a much shorter period and not really providing the same "contexts" as Europe and North America. Though this may be true, this does not actually impact the usefulness of this typology in the Chinese setting since it basically assumes all contexts attempt to address the same "constants." However, it is a bit unnerving that this typology is so Western-centric.

This is not to say that the main contributions of this typology as expanded by Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder (namely the use of theological "constants" across various "contexts") are not helpful. What it does say is that the paradigm perhaps needs to be adjusted for the Chinese context, as shown in the table below:

	Type A	Type B	Type C
Prototype	Tertullian	Origen	Irenaeus
Chinese Proponents	Watchman Nee Wang Mingdao John Sung	L. C. Wu T. C. Chao (early) Y. T. Wu	T. C. Chao (late) K. H. Ting
Key Theme	Law	Truth	History
Christology	Person: high Work: substitution	Person: low Work: exemplar	Person: high Work: transform
Ecclesiology	Institutional	Mystical	Servant
Eschatology	Futurist Individual	Realised Individual	Inaugurated Historical
Salvation	Individual	Social/National	Holistic
Anthropology	Negative	Positive	Positive and Negative
Causation	Synergism	Humanistic Monergism	Synergism
Socio-political	Counter-cultural	Anthropological	Praxis
Religio-philosophical	Exclusive	Pluralist	Inclusive/Pluralist

This further develops the typology of González and Bevans–Schroeder in several major areas. Firstly, it uses the distinctives of Chinese contextual theology. So, for example, while Bevans and Schroeder claim that a type C theology upholds a low Christology because of Latin American liberation theologies that insist on a Christology from below (which is ironic because they also discuss Karl Barth as being in that type yet his theology can hardly be characterised as having a low Christology),[7] K. H. Ting and T. C. Chao's later theology clearly embrace a Christology from above where Christ works to transform and redeem humanity and the cosmos. Likewise, differing from Bevans–Schroeder's understanding of a type C anthropology as positive, both K. H. Ting and T. C. Chao's later thought see human nature as having a tension of being both positive and negative. Ting, for example, accepts the idea that all humans are sinners, but prefers to emphasise the fact that humans are also sinned against. In the case of Chao's later theology, though he would embrace the doctrine of

[7] Ibid, 63–64.

original sin, he was still optimistic that humanity had the abilities and the potential to contribute to the social reconstruction of China.

This modified typology also highlights certain aspects of a Chinese, type B theology which would otherwise be hidden in the framework developed by the previous studies. Firstly, rather than understanding salvation as "spiritual illumination," it seems better to highlight the idea that a type B Chinese soteriology pursues social or national salvation as opposed to a type A Chinese soteriology that looks for individual salvation. This is largely due to the concerns of the May Fourth Enlightenment, but can equally be seen as important in the Second Chinese Enlightenment as well. However, this may also be due to the emphasis of Chinese traditional teachings like in Confucianism and Daoism on the importance of social relationships. Another important characteristic of this typology for the type B theology is the new theological constant of "causation." This is a very important category because it allows one to more clearly differentiate between Chinese theologies of types B and C. Both types B and C have an interest in affecting the greater society and culture. But what "causation" provides is the added dimension of recognising what roles God and humanity each play in the process of that change. Additionally, since there has yet to be a prominent Chinese theology that embraces divine monergism, this remains completely absent from the table.

Another area that this adapted typology addresses more fully is the question of a "contextual theology." As we have noted, Bevans and Schroeder developed their typology around the idea of mission history and have included certain Western-centric understandings of culture. We have also discussed in the previous chapters that a contextual theology must engage two poles: the socio-political reality and the religio-philosophical heritage. Hence, in our adapted typology, we have amended the section on "Christology," removed the category of "culture" and created two new constants representing the two poles. This adjustment makes the typology useful not only for Chinese contextual theology, but also makes it adaptable for other contexts as well – especially when exploring theologies developed in

regions where questions of multi-religious affiliation are plentiful, as seen in other parts of Asia.

It should be noted that, as this framework has attempted to build on previous studies, future studies may inevitably adapt or amend this framework as well. For example, I have chosen to focus on Protestant Christianity and have not really discussed Chinese Catholic Christianity. Moreover, I have also not dealt very closely with any of the scholars of Sino-Christian Theology. In regards to the latter, this is partly due to the fact that Sino-Christian Theology is still in its infancy and is continuing to evolve. But, even more importantly, many of these scholars of Christian studies do not even consider themselves as Christians – arguably a necessary criterion to develop a proper "theology" (although Peter Abelard [1079–1142], for example, believed that theology should be developed through a spirit of doubt and questioning).

The focus of this tripartite typology has been on Chinese theology from major Christian leaders, many of whom have lived and produced most of their theological contributions in the twentieth-century context and have impacted both Chinese enlightenments. This of course does not nearly address as vast a history as the systems developed by González and Bevans–Schroeder that work with two millennia of data. But, for the purposes of this present study, it has been beneficial in mapping the history of Chinese contextual theology and identifying that, indeed a type C theology needs more development. Additionally, it has shown that their typology can be utilised and useful in a concrete, non-Western context.

TYPE C THEOLOGY: A CHINESE–BYZANTINE THEOLOGY?

Finally, this study has attempted to look towards the ancient Byzantine doctrine of *theosis* and closely related subjects to provide the basis for developing a new, type C

contextual theology for the Second Chinese Enlightenment. Since *theosis* itself is a fairly complex doctrine in Eastern Orthodox theology, I have tried to focus on the three key themes important to this soteriological concept: sin, synergy and union. These ideas all deal with the basic concerns of theological anthropology. On the one hand, they speak about the human condition – what is the basic nature of a human being? But, on the other hand, these ideas also highlight the human potential – what is humanity's calling and responsibility?

In chapter five, we saw how all three of these themes (i.e., sin, synergy and union) were found both in the Chinese religio-philosophical impulse as well as the Chinese contextual theologies explored in this study. So, for example, while sin may be a prominent concept in both the Bible and in Christian theology, it has often historically clashed with Chinese traditional and Western modern ideas that held to a positive anthropology. While this led some Christian thinkers to propose alternative hamartiologies based on ideas of "selfishness" or the "sinned against," a more pessimistic hamartiology would find greater prominence whenever individuals were faced with the problem of evil. In light of the positive anthropology of Chinese thought, "original sin" would form the basis of their answers to anthropodicy.

In regards to the metaphysics of causation, as demonstrated in chapter five, we have not yet seen any example of a divine monergism making its way into a Chinese contextual theology. As several younger house churches have begun to embrace many Calvinistic teachings, this possibility does exist. But even then, the main intention for these Chinese Christians who look towards the Reformed tradition is to develop a stronger ecclesiology and a more robust public theology. Perhaps, there is yet to be an ideological crisis in China which demands the need for a divine monergism, as Augustine has argued was occasioned by his debates with Pelagius. However, whether it be Buddhism, Marxism or Christianity, all attempts at importing a foreign ideology that articulates a hard deterministic or compatibilist approach to causation has thus far required a significant amendment in order to be brought

into the Chinese context. Hence Christian contextual theologies have tended to take up views of causation that either emphasise synergism or a humanistic monergism.

When exploring the idea of union with the divine, we saw in chapter five how this is a major motif of both Chinese Christianity and all Chinese religions and philosophies. Particularly, the maxim *Tian ren heyi* (Heaven and humanity in unity) has been found in most Chinese folk religions and later philosophies and religions as Confucianism, Daoism and even Marxism. Though it had shamanistic origins, it would later result in a more pantheistic view of divine/natural and human orders. In this study, we have seen how this motif has resulted in various Chinese theologies that hold to some form of a union between divine and human orders – whether this be the unity of wills (Watchman Nee), unity of consciousness (T. C. Chao) or unity of eschatological goals (K. H. Ting).

Overall, we have seen how Chinese theological answers around sin, synergy and union have arisen through Chinese Christians who have needed to find a rootedness, intentionally or not, in the dual identities of "Chinese" and "Christian." Oftentimes, since the two identities have been seen as quite divergent, a common tendency has been to focus on one at the expense of the other. Nevertheless, formulations of sin, synergy and union have appeared in the Chinese context in ways that have been quite different from Western theology or philosophy.

In chapter six, we continued our exploration by looking explicitly at the Eastern Orthodox view of the same three themes, as it relates to the soteriological category of *theosis*. In particular, we saw how these concepts have provided solutions that, while developing along the trajectory of Eastern Christianity, can be useful also within the "religious fever" of the Second Chinese Enlightenment. Quite importantly, while "Chinese" and "Western Christianity" is often seen as quite opposing voices, Eastern Orthodoxy has been shown to provide a third, mediating voice between those two extremes. Unfortunately, this study has not had the opportunity or space to explore in detail Catholic Christianity in the Chinese

context – a tradition which may also provide much use in the Chinese enlightenments. It has, however, provided for the Chinese theological discourse, particularly in Sino-Christian Theology, a larger picture of Christianity as not being limited to simply Western Christianity of types A and B, but inclusive of a type C understanding as formulated by Eastern Orthodoxy. We have also seen how Byzantine approaches to all three subjects have, in a way, preempted the concerns of several Chinese thinkers (e.g., the apprehensions of T. C. Chao and Liu Xiaofeng [1956–] with *Tian ren heyi*). This shows that Byzantine teachings do provide helpful theological solutions to the questions posed by China's religio-philosophical traditions.

But what about this other "pole" of the Second Chinese Enlightenment's socio-political concerns? How useful is a type C theology, built upon the Eastern Orthodox teaching of *theosis*, for key concerns of modernity and nation-building? In other words, does Eastern Orthodoxy have the intellectual basis for dealing with China's enlightenment concerns? In chapter six, we saw how there have been many strides of Eastern Orthodox theologians to engage in science and democracy, articulating theology in a more cataphatic manner and critique extremes of modernity through methods from postmodernity and postcolonialism. We also made mention of Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov who, shifting from Marxism to Eastern Orthodoxy, used the Byzantine ideas as a basis for constructing a political theology.

However, it is hard to say whether Eastern Orthodoxy has been able to provide for enlightenment concerns in Eastern European contexts – areas where Orthodoxy has historically been quite prominent. There is the case of Russia which has advanced quite a bit in science and technology, particularly as seen in aerospace engineering that has competed quite well against the programme in the United States. Conversely, there is also the case of Greece which, at the time of this writing, is at the verge of defaulting on its debt and causing a ripple effect in the eurozone and the overall global economy. However, it is very difficult to

determine how the intellectual underpinnings and related socio-political quests of Russia and Greece today remain influenced by Eastern Orthodox theology.

Besides its original contexts, can Eastern Orthodoxy be successful in a new setting – the socio-political context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment? This question is similar to asking, during the 1960s, if Confucianism could be useful for the modernisation and nation-building of China. At that time, there was little credible evidence that one would have to suggest that Confucianism could aid in China's enlightenment concerns. However, today, many intellectuals in China, impressed by the so-called "Confucian ethic" seen in the economic prosperity of Japan and the four little dragons (*si xiao long*) of Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and South Korea, argue that Confucianism is now a useful ideology for the socio-political concerns of the Second Chinese Enlightenment.

But can this likewise be said of Byzantine theology which, today, does not appear to have made much significant impact in any country's modernisation or nation-building? Firstly, Eastern Orthodoxy assumes that individual worth, important as the basis for democracy and freedom, is not dependent on some authority figure but is created in all of humanity through God's image and likeness. As the Psalmist declares in a favourite Bible verse amongst exponents of *theosis,* "You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you" (Psalm 82:6, NRSV). This is additionally seen in the doctrine of ancestral sin which teaches that the evil and mortality of humanity is something foreign and not inherent to the nature of humanity and, therefore, something that can and should be eradicated. Or, as we saw with Maximus the Confessor, sin and guilt are due to the gnomic will – a non-essential quality of human nature. Additionally, since there is no "ancestral guilt," Byzantine theology also regards the individual as possessing the essential qualities of human freedom and moral responsibility. Humans were created morally immature but with the goal, in the likeness of God, to achieve moral perfection. However, like Liu Xiaofeng, this moral standard is not limited by the immanent world but set upon a transcendent moral reference point.

Secondly, like we saw in the thoughts the Orthodox Syrian Paulos Mar Gregorios (1922–1996) and the developments of Russian Orthodoxy in the 19th and 20th centuries, God has a deep concern for creation. Particularly we have discussed that the Eastern Christian teaching of humanity as microcosm assumes both that humanity itself is part of nature and that all of nature is crafted to join in a cosmic chorus of worship to God. In the rapidly growing materialistic and consumer-oriented society of China, the mastery of nature must be held in a tension with the mystery of worship of God (or in the case of Marxist Li Zehou [1930–], aesthetic appreciation).

Finally, the Eastern Orthodox view of *theosis* holds that humanity is not only microcosm, but also cosmic mediator. In a "blessed inversion," God became human so that humanity may become divine – not in essence, but in activity. Humans are called to participate in the divine activities, bring harmony where divisions once prevailed, and to transform this world and aide in its progress. Despite Eastern Orthodoxy's inability to affect its greater culture while under communist and Muslim regimes, Byzantine theology still asserts that humans are to engage in this world. *Theosis* is not merely an individualised soteriology, but, as we saw in chapter three with T. C. Chao, one's salvation is vitally connected to the salvation of the cosmos. While it is difficult to say how successful Eastern Orthodoxy has been in the past, what can be said is that Eastern Orthodox ideas, found in the very different setting of China, can be useful as a supplement or a complement to the theological approaches to both the religio-philosophical traditions and the socio-political quests of the Second Chinese Enlightenment.

LOOKING FORWARD

Throughout the course of this study, we have focused on the developments of Chinese theology in the context of two Chinese enlightenments. We have utilised a typology to map

three different types of theology that have arisen within China. However, we also saw how this typology, used previously by a church historian and two missiologists, needed to be adjusted to better fit the Chinese situation. This mapping also helped to highlight the overall bias towards Western theological resources, with a tendency towards two of the three major types. While an amended version of this typology was useful in this study of Chinese contextual theology, it may also be useful in understanding the trends of other contextual theologies and underscoring the areas that need further development. In particular, we have seen how our understanding of Christian theology must be much more broad and not limited to the dominance of a Western or Latin Christianity.

However, this study has also placed key themes in Eastern Orthodoxy's theological anthropology in dialogue with China's philosophical and religious tradition, as seen mainly within the *sanjiao*. In the last two chapters, we saw how concepts of the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* could be implicitly found within all three types of Chinese theology as well as China traditional philosophy and religion. Ancestral sin, synergy and a view of humanity as microcosm and mediator all give new categories for discussion in the Second Chinese Enlightenment. In the last chapter, we briefly discussed how the intellectual resources of Orthodoxy have been utilised to address questions of modernity and nation-building. Additionally, some may find it useful to see other Eastern Orthodox themes like spirituality, aesthetics and ecclesiology juxtaposed against the Chinese context. All these ideas, in a very different location as China, can prove to be useful to complement or supplement the many thoughts already being explored during this Second Chinese Enlightenment.

Additionally, further studies should find a great deal of value in exploring the relationship between Eastern Orthodoxy and Eastern European countries, many of which have had a significant number of Byzantine adherents. How does Orthodoxy's role in the Russian Enlightenment during the reign of Catherine the Great (1762–1796) compare with religion's role in China's enlightenments? However ill-directed Catherine may have been in her

attempts at Westernisation, she did play a key role in the attack of serfdom, and encouraging education, science and the arts. Secondly, why is it that many of the scholars in Sino-Christian Theology have found much interest in the writings of those who have been strongly influenced by Russian Orthodoxy like Fyodor Mikhaylovich Dostoyevsky (1821–1881) and Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1828–1910)? (Incidentally, Dostoyevsky has also influenced another favourite amongst scholars in Sino-Christian Theology, Karl Barth.[8]) It seems curious that there is a good deal of intellectual affinity between these Russian and Chinese writers. Finally, Eastern Orthodoxy has endured through the oppression of Islam and communism. Particularly in regards to the latter, what lessons can be learned when comparing religion behind the iron curtain and China, today's last remaining, significant socialist country?

While this study has mainly focused on Protestant and Byzantine theologies, very little has been discussed in regards to Roman Catholic theology. Since the early-1980s, Chinese Catholic Christianity has also seen a rapid growth in the number of converts. Unlike Protestant theology which is deeply shaped by the Neoplatonic worldview of Augustine (354–430), Catholic theology is much more influenced by the Aristotelian worldview of Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). Hence, as opposed to a Neoplatonic orientation that distrusts the material world, Aristotelian philosophy has provided Catholicism with a framework for such themes as natural law, entelechy and a less deterministic understanding of causation. Like Eastern Orthodoxy, Catholic theology can be useful in providing a *via media* between the negative anthropology of Augustine and the positive anthropology of China traditional teachings.

This study has attempted to present a more comprehensive picture of Christianity for the Chinese context than what has already existed thus far. Hence, as a growing number of scholars in Sino-Christian Theology explore Christianity, it is vitally important to understand

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[8] Paul H. Brazier, *Barth and Dostoevsky: A Study of the Influence of the Russian Writer Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky on the Development of the Swiss Theologian Karl Barth, 1915-1922* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2007).

that Christianity is much broader and deeper than what has historically been offered by Western missionaries and theologians. Eastern Orthodoxy provides additional categories for academic discourse and development. It also helps retrieve an important element from both Christianity and the Chinese religions and philosophies: the important teaching of unity between Heaven and humanity. We must remember that Chinese religions and philosophies, especially the *sanjiao*, have historically existed in an ecosystem that learned and shared from one another. Can the Chinese traditional teachings grow from its engagement with Christianity? Can Christianity be recognised as the fourth great teaching of China, alongside with the *sanjiao* (three teachings) of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism? This may one day be true if a Chinese contextual theology is able to embrace at its core the maxim characteristic of all other Chinese religions and philosophies: *Tian ren heyi*.

CHINESE–ENGLISH GLOSSARY

Listed below is a glossary of Chinese terms and names used in this study and their common English renderings. The romanisation is always given in Pinyin with alternative renderings given in parentheses. Chinese characters are given based on the traditional Chinese system.

Phonetic Rendering(s)	Chinese Characters	English Rendering
baihua	白話	vernacular Chinese language
ben-mo	本末	beginning and end
bense jiaohui	本色教會	indigenous church
Chen Chonggui	陳崇桂	Marcus Cheng (1884–1963)
Chen Duxiu (Chen Tu-hsiu)	陳獨秀	Chen Duxiu (1879–1942)
Chen Rongjie (Wing-tsit Chan)	陳榮捷	Wing-tsit Chan (1901–1994)
dangdai xin rujia / *dangdai xin ruxue*	當代新儒家／當代新儒學	Contemporary Neo-Confucianism
Dao (Tao)	道	the Way
Dao Feng	道風	Logos and Pneuma
daojia	道家	philosophical Daoism
daojiao	道教	religious Daoism
dasheng fojiao	大乘佛教	Mahāyāna Buddhism
Deng Xiaoping	鄧小平	Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997)
di er ci qimeng	第二次啟蒙	Second Enlightenment
Ding Guangxun (Ting Kuang-hsun)	丁光訓	K. H. Ting (1915–)
Du Weiming (Tu Wei-ming)	杜維明	Tu Wei-ming (1940–)
fojiao	佛教	Buddhism
foxing	佛性	buddha-nature
guanhua	官話	bureaucratic Chinese language
Guomingdang (Kuomintang)	國民黨	Chinese Nationalist Party

Phonetic Rendering(s)	Chinese Characters	English Rendering
Hanyu Jidu Shenxue	漢語基督神學	Sino-Christian Theology
Hanyu Shenxue	漢語神學	Sino-theology
he	和	harmony
He Guanghu	何光滬	He Guanghu (1950–)
He Shang	河殤	River Elegy (1988 CCTV documentary series)
hexie shehui	和諧社會	harmonious society
Hong Xiuquan	洪秀全	Hong Xiuquan (1814–1864)
hou zongpai shiqi	後宗派時期	post-denominational era
Hu Jintao	胡錦濤	Hu Jintao (1942–)
Hu Shi (Hu Shih)	胡適	Hu Shi (1891–1962)
Jia Yuming (Chia Yu-ming)	賈玉銘	Jia Yuming (1880–1964)
Jiang Zemin	江澤民	Jiang Zemin (1926–)
jidujiao re	基督教熱	Christianity fever
Jidujiao Sixiang Pinglun	基督教思想評論	Regent Review of Christian Thoughts
Jidujiao Wenhua Pinglun	基督教文化評論	Christian Culture Review
jiefang	解放	liberation
Jiefang Zhanzheng	解放戰爭	War of Liberation
Jing Feng (Ching Feng)	景風	Ching Feng
jiuguo	救國	national salvation
Juhuichu / *Juhuisuo*	聚會處 / 聚會所	Assembly Hall
junzi	君子	profound person
Kongzi (Kung-tzu)	孔子	Confucius (551–479 BC)
Laozi (Lao-tzu)	老子	Laozi (4th century BC)
Li Changshou	李常受	Witness Lee (1905–1997)
Li Zehou	李澤厚	Li Zehou (1930–)
Liang Qichao (Liang Chi-chao)	梁啟超	Liang Qichao (1873–1929)
Liang Shuming (Liang Sou-ming)	梁漱溟	Liang Shuming (1893—1988)
lijiao	禮教	Confucian code of ethics

Phonetic Rendering(s)	Chinese Characters	English Rendering
Lingshi Jikan	靈食季刊	Spiritual Food Quarterly
Liu Xiaofeng	劉小楓	Liu Xiaofeng (1956–)
Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung)	毛澤東	Mao Zedong (1893–1976)
Mengzi (Meng-tzu)	孟子	Mencius (c. 372–c. 289 BC)
Mou Zongsan	牟宗三	Mou Zongsan (1909–1995)
Mozi (Mo-tzu)	墨子	Mozi (c. 470–c. 391 BC)
nei sheng, wai wang	內聖外王	inner sage, outer king
Ni Tuosheng (Nee Shu-Tsu)	倪柝聲	Watchman Nee (1903–1972)
pu	樸	primordial simplicity (Daoist)
puti	菩提	enlightenment (Buddhist)
qigong	氣功	qigong
qimeng	啟蒙	enlightenment (intellectual movement)
Qin Jiayi	秦家懿	Julia Ching (1934–2001)
Qu Qiubai	瞿秋白	Qu Qiubai (1899–1935)
ren (jen)	仁	benevolence
rendao	人道	the human way
renjian fojiao	人間佛教	humanistic Buddhism
Renmin Jiefangjun	人民解放軍	People's Liberation Army
rujia / *rujiao* / *ruxue*	儒家／儒教／儒學	Confucianism
sanjiao	三教	the three teachings
shehuizhuyi shichang jingji	社會主義市場經濟	socialist market economy
shengren	聖人	sage
shenxue jianshe	神學建設	theological construction / theological reconstruction
si xiao long	四小龍	four little dragons
sige xiandaihua	四個現代化	Four Modernisations
Song Ming lixue	宋明理學	Neo-Confucianism
Song Quansheng (Choan-seng Song)	宋泉盛	C. S. Song (1929–)

Phonetic Rendering(s)	Chinese Characters	English Rendering
Song Shangjie (Sung Shang-chieh)	宋尚節	John Sung (1901–1944)
Sun Zhongshan	孫中山	Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925)
taijiquan (tai chi chuan)	太極拳	tai chi chuan
Taiping Tianguo	太平天國	Taiping Heavenly Kingdom
Taiping Tianguo Yundong	太平天國運動	Taiping Rebellion
Taixu (Tai Hsü)	太虛	Taixu (1890–1947)
Tian (Tien)	天	Heaven
tian ren heyi	天人合一	Heaven and humanity in unity
Tiandao	天道	the Heavenly way
tianming	天命	Heavenly Mandate
tiansheng rencheng	天生人成	Heaven creates, humanity completes
Wang Mingdao (Wong Ming-tao)	王明道	Wang Mingdao (1900–1991)
Wen Jiabao	溫家寶	Wen Jiaobao (1942–)
wenhua fojiaotu	文化佛教徒	Cultural Buddhist
wenhua jidutu	文化基督徒	Cultural Christian
wenhua re	文化熱	cultural fever
Wu Leichuan (Wu Lei-chuen)	吳雷川	L. C. Wu (1870–1944)
Wu Yaozong (Wu Yao-tsung)	吳耀宗	Y. T. Wu (1893–1979)
wusi yundong	五四運動	May Fourth movement
wuwei	無為	non-action
xiao	孝	filial piety
Xiaoqun	小群	Little Flock
xin qimeng	新啟蒙	New Enlightenment
Xin Qingnian	新青年	New Youth journal
xin rujia / xin ruxue	新儒家／新儒學	New Confucianism
Xiong Shili (Hsiung Shihli)	熊十力	Xiong Shili (1885–1968)
xiti zhongyong	西體，中用	Western essence, Chinese application

Phonetic Rendering(s)	Chinese Characters	English Rendering
xiushen	修身	self-cultivation
Xu Baoqian (Hsu Po-chien)	徐寶謙	P. C. Hsu (1892–1944)
Xunzi (Hsun-tzu)	荀子	Xunzi (c. 310–237 BC)
Yang Chingkun (Yang Qing-kun)	楊慶堃	C. K. Yang (1911–1999)
Yesu Jiating	耶穌家庭	Jesus Family
yin-guo	因果	cause-effect (Buddhist; *hetu-phala*)
yuzhou de jidu	宇宙的基督	Cosmic Christ
Zhao Zichen (Chao Tsi-chen)	趙紫宸	T. C. Chao (1888–1979)
Zhen Yesu Jiaohui	真耶穌教會	True Jesus Church
zhenren	真人	perfected person
Zhongguo Shehui Kexueyuan	中國社會科學院	Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
Zhongguo Wenhua Shuyuan	中國文化書院	International Academy of Chinese Culture
zhongti xiyong	中體，西用	Chinese essence, Western application
zhongxue wei ti, xixue wei yong	中學為體，西學為用	Chinese learning for essence, Western learning for application
Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai)	周恩來	Zhou Enlai (1898–1976)
Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi)	朱熹	Zhu Xi (1130–1200)
Zhuangzi (Chuang-tzu)	莊子	Zhuangzi (369–286 BC)
Zhuo Xinping	卓新平	Zhuo Xinping (1955–)
zi wo zhongxin	自我中心	self-centred
zisi	自私	selfish
zongjiao re	宗教熱	religious fever
zui'e	罪惡	sin (Protestant)
zuiguo	罪過	sin (Catholic)

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